

Manchester Metropolitan University

Research Institute for Health and Social Change



Artist's impression: image from Strategic Development Framework document

Birley Fields Development: Impact on the Local Community: Health and Wellbeing

Working Paper 2: Masterplanning, Consultation and Initial Community Involvement

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August 2010

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RIHSC: Research Institute for Health & Social Change

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Birley Fields: Impact on Local Community: Health and Wellbeing: Masterplanning and Consultation

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report addresses the strategic activities that have taken in relation to the Birley Fields development between the period of December 2008-June 2010. This is the period between the decision to pursue the development, the preparation of the Masterplan and the completion of the public consultation regarding the development.

It is the second to be produced as part of one of two longitudinal studies accompanying the development of Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU) development of a new campus on Birley Fields, in Hulme, Manchester. The longitudinal study aims to explore and understand the experiences of local residents and workers as well as university staff of the processes of moving to and developing the Birley Fields campus and its impact over time.

The report contributes to the first strand of the study: to monitor the process of change in order to provide a record of the development; better understand the initiative; inform decisions concerning the development; and promote awareness of achievements.

Sources of information included documents and reports, academic papers, interviews and conversations with key personnel involved in the development and with staff and students who are working in Hulme and Moss Side and with residents, observations of events and activities, social networking site discussion threads, web sites, archive film and press cuttings.

Key Issues

Within a short period of time a Masterplan was produced and a strategic partnership had been formed that was highly appreciated on all sides.

The Masterplanning process missed opportunities to engage local expertise in, for example, urban planning and design.

There was minimal engagement of the community in the development of the Masterplan.

A number of different channels were used to give information about the development on an ongoing basis, particularly by MMU but also by MCC.

Little information extending awareness about everyday events in Hulme has been made available to staff in the University.

Local people have not been involved in organising and conducting the communications activities but have developed a number of on line groups for discussing the developments.

Greater involvement in all parts of the process will contribute to social aspects of sustainable development.

A large public consultation event took place over a period of 12 weeks and the responses more or less reflected the Hulme and Moss Side populations.

Opportunities were missed to specifically seek views from the silent majority, and members of a wide range of interest and 'outcast' communities: care will be needed to ensure the strongest voices are not just those of men.

A sustainability workshop was held in acknowledgement of the local environmental interests, and requests for meetings with specific residents' alliances were met.

An active minority of residents have expressed their opposition to the developments reflecting the complexity of different interests and the future challenge is to enable the silent majority to have a voice.

It is not clear how issues raised in the consultation will be responded to and there are some indications of residents' views not being explored further prior to being dismissed.

When viewed as processes of participation, the Masterplanning and consultation processes were found to have been at the tokenistic end of a spectrum of public participation.

Some paradoxes and contradictions within the consultation process have been identified and care will be needed not to feed local cynicism regarding how their voices will be listened to in the development.

There is evidence of a willingness on the part of senior staff in the University to listen, and go beyond information-giving consultation in novel ways.

Birley Fields: Impact on Local Community: Health and Wellbeing: Masterplanning and Consultation

Contents

Introduction	3
The Birley Fields Development.....	3
Longitudinal Study.....	4
Masterplan Development.....	4
Review of Masterplanning process	7
Information (or marketing).....	9
Public consultation	10
Targeted groups for consultation.....	12
Gender.....	14
Invited Meetings	14
Open Meetings	15
Resident led consultation.....	15
Review of consultation process	16
What changed as a result of the consultation?	17
Involvement and participation.....	19
Conclusion.....	21
References.....	23
Appendices.....	25
Appendix 1: Timeline of activities: engagement, development, consultation.....	25

Introduction

This report is the second to be produced as part of one of two longitudinal studies accompanying the development of Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU) development of a new campus on Birley Fields, in Hulme, Manchester. The longitudinal study aims to explore and understand the experiences of local residents and workers as well as university staff of the processes of moving to and developing the Birley Fields campus and its impact over time. This report addresses the strategic activities that have taken in relation to the Birley Fields development between the period of December 2008-June 2010. This is the period between the decision to pursue the development, the preparation of the Masterplan and the completion of the public consultation regarding the development.

The report contributes to the first strand of the study: to monitor the process of change in order to provide a record of the development; better understand the initiative; inform decisions concerning the development; and promote awareness of achievements. This phase was designed to contribute to new understandings of people-place initiatives and of university-community engagement.

Sources of information underpinning this report are documents and reports, academic papers, interviews and conversations with key personnel involved in the development and with staff and students who are working in Hulme and Moss Side and with residents, observations of events and activities, social networking site discussion threads, web sites, archive film and press cuttings.

The Birley Fields Development

A reduction in the number of Faculty sites within MMU has been part of successive Strategic Plans. The most recent plan includes the consolidation of the MMU estate from 7 to 2 centres (MMU 2007). In pursuit of this objective, during 2007 and 2008 proposals were made to close the Elizabeth Gaskell Campus and relocate the Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care to an expanded campus with the Institute of Education at Didsbury. However, the proposals met with some opposition from local residents who were concerned about the increase in the number of students, the height of the new building proposed and general issues such as increased traffic and parking. A number of public meetings were held at which local opposition to the plans were voiced. Both faculties concerned had drawn up detailed requirements about the design and usage of the new spaces, building on a process of wide consultation with staff affected by the move. These plans were changed in early 2009 when the Vice Chancellor made a decision to pursue the possibility of moving to a designated brownfield site close to the All Saints campus, at Birley Fields in Hulme (Brooks, 2009), with the political support of the City Council. The two major advantages of developing a campus at Birley Fields were (i) to aid the achievement of university site consolidation; and (ii) to contribute to the continuing regeneration of the area which had begun in 1992 and was reiterated in 2006 (MCC, 2006).

Thus the Birley Fields development includes the relocation of the Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care and the Institute of Education from the existing Elizabeth Gaskell and Didsbury campuses. The relocation will include the building of new

teaching and research accommodation, as well as student residences. The plans include commercial and public space. The planned development is different from but commensurate with the objectives of Manchester City Council's (MCC) Birley Fields strategic review (MCC, 2006), which included a Development and Land Use Strategy for the undeveloped brownfield land. As part of the background framing MMU's proposals, MCC noted the ongoing need to develop the site as part of the long term regeneration of Hulme in particular and the city in general:

{...}parts of the new development have been slow to market and remain empty or underoccupied with remaining plots of land lying vacant. Taken together, the unoccupied sites and buildings in this area do not create a positive image of Hulme at this prominent and high profile gateway to the city. (MCC, 2009a:2.2)

The Birley Fields Development Plan was approved by the City Council in June 2009, pending consultation with the community and amendments derived from the consultation.

The plan is for the new campus to be built by 2014. The process of development has begun, although at the time of writing (April 2010) planning approval is still to be obtained and no construction has started.

It is worth noting that the major part of MMU is already located within the Hulme boundary, and although MMU and its predecessor Manchester Polytechnic have always contributed to the City in multiple ways, its penetration into its neighbourhood base has not been an explicit strategic priority until now.

Longitudinal Study

There are ambitious plans for the development of the new campus to be groundbreaking, not just in terms of the buildings to be erected, but also in terms of the sustainability of the project, the processes of engagement to be employed throughout the development and the permeability of the new campus to the public once it is completed. Two longitudinal studies have been designed to: *provide a detailed, multidimensional case study of community engagement for universities in the 21st Century University.*

The Research Institute for Health and Social Change at MMU has been commissioned to explore the experiences, over time, of local residents and workers as well as university staff and to examine the development as a case study of university-community engagement¹. In the first instance resources were secured for one year to explore activities to date, during the planning stages, and to prioritise an external rather than internal (to MMU) focus.

Masterplan Development

At the end of 2008 the Vice Chancellor of MMU proposed the Birley fields Development to MCC and received support for the idea.

our mission and values speak of community engagement, equality of opportunity, widening participation and access to life-changing education, and we are committed to regeneration and employment ...[the Birley Fields development was]...an opportunity that would help to transform Manchester

¹ The second longitudinal study, overseen by the Education and Social Research Institute has a focus on education and learning.

Metropolitan University and place us at the heart of inner-city educational improvement and economic regeneration. A hurriedly arranged meeting with Manchester City Council proved that my idea would not only garner strong political support, but would also gather momentum as the concept was shared and refined. (Brooks, 2009)

John McAslan and Partners, architects were commissioned to develop a Masterplan or Strategic development Framework, for Birley Fields, and worked with a partnership of senior officers at MMU and MCC, including local elected representatives, and in conjunction with ARUP, Drivers Jonas, Gardiner & Theobald, and Colin Buchanan (SDF, 2009). A timeline of the development can be seen at Appendix 1.

In 2006 there had been a consultation about the use of the fields and views from members of the community contributed to this. These views have influenced the Masterplan. Extract 1 is a statement to this effect from the FAQ site on MMU's Birley Fields website.

Extract 1: How resident views from the earlier (2006) consultation on the development of Birley Fields have influenced the Masterplan (<http://www.mmu.ac.uk/hulme/hulme-faq.php#8>)

The results from previous consultations in 2006 have been carefully considered in producing the new plans for the Birley Fields campus.

We heard how important it is to you to provide jobs for local people. We are therefore aiming to provide as many employment opportunities as possible for local people.

There will be a variety of jobs available during the construction period, once the campus is up and running and also through increased spending in the area as a result of the increased student and staff population.

We also heard that providing green space is important to you. A large area of open green space is central to the scheme. This will be about the same size as Albert Square or Exchange Square – but greener. This space is for use by both the university and the wider community.

We also understand the benefits of tree planting and aim to have as many trees on the campus as possible to help create a green environment.

We listened to Hulme residents' concerns about the environment. The campus will be designed to incorporate the latest environmental technologies which will minimise carbon, water and waste and maximise ecology. It will be the greenest campus in Britain.

A joint statement from MMU and MCC was issued in February 2009 in the first Birley Fields newsletter, outlining the vision for the development and flagging up the opportunity for community involvement at a later stage.

Residents, businesses and community groups are to be fully consulted on the scheme before it gets the go ahead. ... Once a Masterplan is completed in the spring, the University and City Council will be holding a series of public meetings when the partners will be taking detailed plans into community venues and asking for your observations and comments. (Birley Fields Newsletter, February 2009)

Extract 2 captures some key statements from the Vice Chancellor contained within the Masterplan (SDF, 2009), linked to the vision for the development and anticipated internal changes to the University arising from the development.

Extract 2 Vice Chancellor's statements in The Birley Fields Masterplan (SDF, 2009)

"The development of the Birley Fields Hulme campus, at the heart of the local community, will unite provision for teachers, nurses, social workers, psychologists and other healthcare professionals onto a single site. The campus will offer new opportunities for learning and interdisciplinary research, and its proximity to the city centre and access to social, leisure and cultural attractions will enhance the student experience.

MMU's strategic aim is to provide a sustainable estate that is truly fit for purpose to improve the student experience, allow better utilisation of space and increased engagement with local and regional stakeholders. This unique opportunity is seen as a powerful symbol and gateway for MMU's community engagement, with a major focus on regeneration for the whole area. It will also contribute significantly to Corridor Manchester which aims to marry the knowledge capacity of Oxford Road's learning quarter to the City's social, community and economic ambitions." (SDF, 2009:4)

"The internal challenge is to modernise our systems and processes, to improve the quality of our services, and to rationalise our estate . . . The estate's development is very exciting and will define the new physical shape of the University at All Saints and Crewe." The reduction in MMU's campuses, from seven to two, will contribute to what Prof. Brooks describes as "the real long-term benefits from changes in [university] culture and operation." (SDF, 2009:8)

The proposal revolves around four functions: academic, student accommodation, potential community services and car parking. A key feature of the strategic framework is one of sustainability and the Masterplan proposes four interlinked principles of sustainability threaded throughout the development: people (their behaviour, preferences and foresight); community (including social structures such as governance, law and order, shared values, institutions and organisations all of which contribute to social capital); buildings and infrastructure (tangible resources with which society creates wealth and provides shelter and other essential services); and financial capital (reflecting the productive capacity of the services and goods that people and organisations provide). MMU aspires to build the greenest campus in Britain and the strategic framework sets out targets for zero carbon, zero water; zero waste and maximum biodiversity.

Extract 3 provides two of several schematic representations of the proposal reproduced in the Masterplan.

The first phase of development was anticipated to be the building of a car park.

The Strategic development framework was submitted to MCC Executive in June 2009 and was approved in principle, pending amendments following detailed consultation with residents and other stakeholders in the area.

Extract 3: The proposed development (Strategic development framework – Masterplan p. 41; 44 – SDF, 2009)



Review of Masterplanning process

The partnership working between MMU and MCC resulted in a comprehensive Masterplan being developed in approximately six months. The process included the involvement of local elected representatives (City Councillors). Clearly the proposal met MCC's wish to continue to develop the site following the stalled developments in the first years of the decade. It was evident from comments made at a stakeholder meeting, that MMU officers and local councillors had worked well together. It remains unclear how the views of residents had been sought and represented by officers and Councillors.

There is clearly mutual appreciation of how MMU staff have worked with local councillors – both the VC and the two local Councillors present (particularly

one of them) made great efforts to thank each other –or congratulate each other- for the way they had engaged in the development process and for listening and taking account of feedback. (Researcher 2, field diary, Stakeholder meeting 29.6.09).

One of the concerns that Councillors had expressed was in relation to the positioning of the car park. Changes had been made to the plan.

We listened to your local Councillors who were concerned about having a car park next to people's homes, and have given the issue very careful consideration. As a result, we now plan to locate the car park next to the Birley Fields office complex, well away from residential areas, and accessible directly from the main Princess Road route. (Statement on Frequently Asked Questions, MMU Birley Fields website.)

Whilst this partnership enabled the Masterplan to be developed quickly, there were missed opportunities to identify and build on existing local expertise. This emerged at the same stakeholder meeting.

One of the longstanding members of Homes for Change raised some queries in relation to the Masterplan. He pointed out that some of the local residents, experienced in urban design and developing Masterplans for urban developments had, some years ago worked with the NUS on plans for student accommodation on one of the BF sites and that it was a shame that they had not been involved in the development proposals. Talking to him afterwards he said this had been the first opportunity to make comments (seems odd as H for C borders on the development) and that it was a shame that they were now in a position of being involved from a point of opposition rather than involvement from the start. (Researcher 2, field diary, Stakeholder meeting 29.6.09).

This illustrates a potential limitation of the way the Masterplan was developed: one that seems to mirror the Manchester model of regeneration of partnership, outlined in Working Paper 1 (Kagan and Duggan, 2010a), particularly with the private sector, accompanied by a paternalistic rather than an empowerment approach to community involvement. University staff were also excluded from involvement in the strategic planning stage, and concern about this was expressed at a briefing meeting held by the Vice Chancellor.

Lots of staff (and students) have existing links with Hulme and some irritation and frustration was expressed that their experiences have not been built on – nor have we been asked about the best way to engage local people and some of us have quite a bit of experience in this area. Opportunity lost! (Researcher 2 Field Diary, Elizabeth Gaskell Briefing Meeting, 12.5.08)

Community involvement is a key part of both regeneration and engaged university processes. Whilst it is recognised that involvement must be looked at as a whole over the different stages of a development process, there are recommendations for involvement in planning and development stages. Drivers Jonas (2009:4) draw attention to the national planning guidance on involvement in the initial development stages of any development, which states:

In developing the vision for their areas, planning authorities should ensure that communities are able to contribute ideas about how that vision can be

achieved, have the opportunity to participate in drawing up the vision, strategy and specific plan policies, and to be involved in development proposals. (Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities (PPS1). Paragraph 13)

As we saw in Working Paper 1, Hulme residents have a history of interest and active involvement in local developments, and guidance over participation in regeneration suggests this is a key factor in deciding on proactive approaches to involvement (COGS, 2000; Taylor and Burns, 2000). Their exclusion at this stage might well contribute to a growing sense of déjà vu for those residents who have complained about levels of involvement in previous rounds of regeneration. That the university did not attempt to engage local people extensively in the strategic development stage is not unusual (van Winden, 2009) but not to do so, limits the extent to which the whole development process is truly an engagement process².

The matter of community involvement will be explored further, below.

Information (or marketing)

The Marketing and Communications division of MMU was given responsibility for providing information about and consulting with the stakeholders over the Birley Fields Development. In close conjunction with the Corporate Development Team (whose portfolio includes the Beacons for Public Engagement project), spaces on the MMU website have been devoted to the development – initially on the *Change* pages of the website and thereafter on pages devoted to Hulme. Documents and newsletters have been posted along with press cuttings that are favourable to the development.

There have been three Birley Fields newsletters, issued jointly by MMU and MCC in February 2009; July 2009; and October 2009. The first set out a broad view of the proposals; the second contained notification of community consultation and included a list of venues for face to face consultation and a questionnaire inviting comments to be returned to the University; the third summarised the feedback from the consultation exercise. Thus they have served as vehicles for communication and can be downloaded from the website.

The website also contains news items – 15 between February 2009 and May 2010, covering information about stages of the development (such as the confirmation of funding, appointment of architects) as well as of projects or events that are have taken place and Hulme and/or with residents of Hulme. Key documents have been made available to the public via the website, including the Strategic Framework document, the Consultation Board, the Presentation of the Masterplan by John McAslan and partners, and the Community Consultation statement which summarises the results of the community consultation. On another part of the website (the *Change* site, to which the public are directed in the first newsletter) is a locked area for university staff only – this gives the appearance of information available internally that is not being shared with the public, although it is difficult to see why only staff have access to the documents in this area.

2

Various people had the opportunity to feedback thoughts about involvement at this stage to the Corporate Development Team, who subsequently put in place some mechanisms for addressing them, such as the decision to invite staff and students living in the area to a specific consultation event.

The local quarterly MCC brochure for the Ward, *Life in Hulme* contains information about the development (Spring 2010) although the *Life in Moss Side* (Spring 2010) does not. One way to get university staff to know more about the neighbourhood would have been to distribute the ward quarterly magazines widely to staff, particularly those based at Elizabeth Gaskell and Didsbury. Whilst University staff do have access to the website which contains information about university events and projects, and to *All Staff* email bulletins of meetings and events, there has been no focused communications with staff about things that are happening in Hulme generally, not just relating to the Birley Fields Development. It seems as if the thinking has been to inform the 'community' about the university but not vice versa. An engaged university approach would be trying to ensure that all relevant parties begin to understand more about each other.

It would be helpful if the University developed its understanding of the purposes and potential of communication for engaged practice, not just in terms of marketing.

The communications processes have not included Hulme residents in their planning, organisation and implementation. One question about sustainable development (one of the goals of the Birley Fields development) is always to ask: *is there a way of doing this that will have extended benefits for all stakeholders (in this case, particularly for those community based development partners), either in terms of using their expertise or developing knowledge, skills and experience?* This way of thinking addresses the social aspects of the sustainable development agenda (inseparable from the economic or environmental aspects, see Cook, 2004; DEFRA, 2005). In relation to communications – could communications have involved local people and be part of a skills development process? There have been signs in the proposals of a concern for 'upskilling' local people, in, for example, construction through the inclusion of apprenticeships and jobs. The challenge for the engaged university is to apply this thinking to all aspects of the development, in this case, communications. The same questions could be asked of the consultation discussed below.

Public consultation

Following approval in principle of the Masterplan, in June 2009, a concentrated 12 week period of consultation took place. Drivers Jonas (2009) provides details of the consultation as well as analysis of the feedback obtained from consultation events, questionnaires and on line messages. They outline the group involved in designing the consultation:

Prior to commencement of the consultation process, a Community Engagement Plan was produced by the Communications Group made up of representatives from MMU, MCC, Corridor Manchester, Drivers Jonas, and approved by the Project Board.(Drivers Jonas, 2009: 6)

It is notable that this plan, too, was drawn up by institutional stakeholders and does not explicitly include local people.

The consultation included 40 events distributed around both Hulme and Moss Side. Priority was given to places with heavy 'people traffic', such as outside ASDA (the largest supermarket in the area), outside schools, community centres or facilities. At least three members of staff from MMU and MCC attended each event and leaflets, FAQ and information boards were available. Summary leaflets and questionnaires were left at service centres and other community venues (5,000) and distributed to

households (8,000). Briefings were provided for other key partners, including ward coordinators and the local housing trust so that they could inform residents about the proposals. Not everyone, though, knew about the consultation events, and even some of those who received the leaflet did not realise there was a questionnaire attached.

I have just met with a Hulme resident who is keyed into a number of community groups. She had the second BF leaflet and said she did not know about any of the consultation events listed there at the time. Nor had she realised until this moment that there was a questionnaire attached – although she added that she would have been unlikely to have filled it in anyway as she does not like questionnaires!. (Researcher 2 field diary,, May 2010)

Thus there was an attempt to penetrate the community with information and requests for feedback. The exercise was primarily one of information giving and listening, rather than one that produced benefits in and of itself for local people, although a chance to win one of five £100 vouchers for ASDA was offered. The consultation was designed to inform and obtain feedback from a 'representative' cross section of the Hulme community. Drivers Jonas report a good geographical spread with almost half of respondents in the area immediately surrounding the proposed campus. It was not clear to some residents of Hulme why the consultation extended to those living and working in Moss Side and beyond, evidenced by feedback from the consultation and some of the correspondence on networking sites as well as comments made some time after the consultation had ended.

I was a bit surprised when [a community organisation director] told me of the links she could help us make with all sorts of community groups [for the Birley Fields study]. But she added, without prompting, that people in Hulme had really strong views about the development of Birley Fields being nothing to do with Moss Siders. They certainly did not see why people from Moss Side should get asked their views. Is this the first indication of in-community, out-community identities being shown that might affect relationships with Hulme? (Researcher 2 Field Diary, Beacons fellow Celebratory Event, November 2009).

This view is not universal.

When I was growing up in Hulme we didn't make any distinction between Hulme, Moss Side, bits of Old Trafford, Whalley Range. The district names are administrative and don't mean anything to people on the ground. (Comment made by ex-Hulme resident, MMU member of staff, January 2010. Researcher 2 Field Diary)

Both views are likely to be widespread Hulme and Moss Side are administrative boundaries. As in all communities, space-place identity is complex: some people identify strongly with the symbolic boundaries of a place, such as administrative wards, others do not (Cohen, 1985, 1986): some local people will identify with a narrow geographical area and others with a much broader one. The meaning of spaces and places, often linked to personal and collective history, contributes to people's differing psychological sense of community (Kagan et al., 2011). Driver Jonas offer an optimistic assessment of the consultation's reach:

The various methods that have been employed to consult with the community have been successful in providing responses from a wide ranging geographic

profile which is more likely to contain responses from hard to reach and isolated members of society (Drivers Jonas, 2009:13).

The basis on which this statement was made is unclear. It has been argued that to have a good reach in community engagement, it is necessary to understand in detail the *different* communities in a locality and target these specifically. Taylor and Burns, (2000:14) for example identify the following categories of groups present in any locality in different proportions: service users; ethnic and religious communities; economic communities (class groups, home owners, social housing dwellers); sub communities (e.g. Asian women might have different views from Asian men); age based groups; geographical communities; communities of interest (e.g. environmental groups, dog walkers); communities of identity (e.g. lesbian women, gay men); workplace communities; and 'outcast' communities (e.g. ex offenders, homeless people).

The emphasis on proportional representation of age, gender, and ethnicity in the consultation process provides a degree of validity to the process, but it is not the approach that will ensure all relevant interests are heard. To their credit, the consultation team did adapt part way through the process as the Birley Fields Project Board "*recognised that ,many residents, businesses and interest groups in the area have a particular interest in sustainability issues in their widest sense which includes both the physical and social environment"* (Driver Jonas 2009: 35). This led them to run an environmental sustainability workshop in September 2009. In addition, other specific groups were visited or requested consultation visits. Whilst it is commendable that the consultation team were able to respond to such requests and identify particular interests, there are many other groups who have not been specifically targeted. It does not seem as if the Project Board approached the consultation from the stance of understanding and reflecting the complexity of the community. Rather, the concern was to ensure that a widespread consultation took place that could be defended in terms of statistical validity. Having said this, some groups were targeted for specific consultation.

Targeted groups for consultation

The Birley Fields consultation made a point of seeking out the views of young people attending Manchester Academy and Loreto College. It also responded to local requests for specific meetings, which included the Hulme Alliance (an alliance of tenants and residents' associations), Moss Side Residents' Association, Homes for Change and work for Change, local businesses, and local residents from the BME community.

In addition, an Environmental sustainability workshop was held with attendees invited from "*a schedule of those members of the community who had previously registered an interest in the sustainable aspects of the proposals"* (Driver Jonas 2009:35). The Hulme Alliance meeting drew attention to some issues that did not feature strongly in the rest of the consultation, but have featured on resident networking sites such as *Our Hulme* Facebook site and *Hulme Residents* Online Group.

Extract 4 presents these issues.

Extract 4: Themed comments from Hulme Alliance Meeting (Driver Jonas 2009: Figure 20 : 33)

Land rights:

Why is the council giving the land to MMU at no charge? The Council should retain its freehold ownership. It shouldn't completely transfer the ownership over to university

The Consultation Process:

Why are you consulting Moss Side?

Community facilities:

Can the improvements to bus links be opened up to St George's? The Open Space should not be a manufactured park.

Affordable housing:

Hulme doesn't need more student accommodation. It needs affordable housing. Does the opportunity exist to put affordable housing in?

The Environmental Sustainability workshop raised a number of issues in discussion groups that also feature strongly on resident network sites, such as the decision to build on Birley Fields rather than use existing empty office space and/or renovate the derelict Nia Centre (ex Hulme Hippodrome and Theatre). Extract 5 provides Driver Jonas' summary of the issues raised in these workshops, which are of particular interest given the history of Hulme residents in campaigning on environmental issues and the claims made of the development to be sustainable.

Extract 5:– Sustainability Workshop Discussion Topics (Driver Jonas, 2009, Figure 24)

Topics of discussion Comments/ Suggestions

“How can we best work together to ensure that the people of Hulme feel that the campus is for them – as well as the students? “

☐MMU must be honest, open and transparent.

☐MMU must build trust.

☐MMU needs to understand the diversity & richness of Hulme – not just in terms of black and white but in terms of languages and faiths.

☐There should be free spaces for the community to use – rehearsal rooms for bands, community kitchens.

☐Students should get involved in mentoring local kids.

“What can we do to ensure that there is a sustainable relationship between university and community? “

☐Try to overcome the transitory nature of students and make them more a part of the local community.

☐MMU should promote positive community events.

“What type of facilities would be valuable on the new campus?”

☐Community facilities could be about enhancing existing resources rather than creating new facilities.

☐Nursery provision in the area has been identified as lacking.

☐The campus could be used to house the job agencies and information centres with clear pathways into work for local people.

“What types of joint projects would be most rewarding for the local sustainability?”

☐MMU needs to find a way of selling the idea of a University education to local children. How do

you make this route appealing? What can you tell people about the kinds of jobs that they will be getting – this needs to be a better choice for a young person than drug dealing.

☐ Students need to be integrated into the local community and businesses need to be given practical advice on how they can attract the student pound. Everybody needs to be aware of what is coming and the young people coming into the campus need to be aware of the local facilities and services that are available.

☐ People need more IT facilities and meeting spaces. Facilities for conferences and events – preferably designed for and by local people. Get the community walking through the corridors not around.

Energy, Waste and Water

☐ Be more ambitious - Needs to be radical for 10- 15 years time not just built with today's regulations in mind. 3 Zero's in 40 years isn't ambitious enough

☐ Link into activities already happening like freecycle, selling compost created on campus sold in local garden centre

☐ Change procurement processes so that environmentally friendly products / materials are purchased rather than just the cheapest.

☐ Use awareness raising activities to educate people into this area Wildlife and Biodiversity

☐ Ecology expertise across MMU and Manchester University. Could be harnessed to maximise biodiversity.

☐ Aerial views look green – but will people experience it on ground?

☐ Allotments and food growing facilities, as a preference to a green lawn, would be great for the community and wildlife.

Transport

☐ Could resident permits be linked to CO2 emissions of cars?

☐ Provide carbon cars (WHIZZ –GO) to be used by staff

☐ Impact on residential parking needs to be considered – students not being able to park in the area around the proposed site will park elsewhere causing problems for residents and parking in St. Georges and other areas of Hulme and Moss Side

Gender

The gender distribution of respondents revealed 49% women and 51% men. This information, alone, does not enable us to assess the extent to which gender representation reflects the odd gender distribution in Hulme. Not only are there more men than women in Hulme (ratio 1.2) but 22.8% of female residents are in the age group 20-24 (compared with 19% males) (MCC, 2009b).

The involvement and voice of women may be of particular importance, as the majority of the visible, vociferous critics, either in past and present overviews of developments in Hulme, or contributing to social networking sites, are men. Gender and regeneration needs careful exploration in order to avoid gender blindness (Risborough, 1998; May, 1997; Smith, 2001); in this case the possibility of gender-age blindness.

Invited meetings

Key stakeholders were invited via a formal letter of invitation to a Stakeholders' presentation event on 29th June, 2009 at which a detailed presentation of the development was given by the Vice Chancellor with a question and answer session. The questions raised included questions about business opportunities and threats; opportunities for community driven public art; the long term plans for community involvement in order to overcome the history of 'them and us' between MCC and residents; safety in the streets around the back of the planned buildings; the closure

of Bonsall Street; traffic and parking, including priority for resident parking; public access and public rights of way; and lack of involvement over the development plans. Some of these concerns echoed many of those raised during the public consultation events and feedback, and reflect other knowledge-driven urban development plans (e.g. van Winden, 2009).

...people asked what's in it for them: they were keen to benefit from new employment and educational opportunities, affordable housing, additional community services. The preservation of heritage buildings was a common suggestion. ... traffic and parking were the greatest concerns. Local residents feared heavy traffic flows, and strongly voiced their concerns about the current parking problems in areas surrounding the site. (van Winden, 2009: 7)

MMU staff and students who live in the area were invited to attend a special internal briefing event on 17 June 2009. During the consultation posters and leaflets were distributed throughout the area.

Open Meetings

Internal staff briefings were held in recognition that *"it was important to ensure that staff internally were kept well informed of the emerging proposals"* (Driver Jonas, 2009:8). These took place on four different sites of the University and were attended by academic, administrative and support staff. The emphasis of these meetings was very much of information giving.

Resident led consultation

Some activist residents have been vociferous in their opposition to the development and have established their own consultation, initially under the *Friends of Birley Fields* group, which has now become the *Our Hulme* group with a remit broader than Birley fields³. At 26th October 2009, 106 people had contributed to this on line consultation, and attempts were being made to increase the numbers. Although the consultation managers were encouraging both positive and negative responses to the development, the majority of comments were negative. This is to be expected given the ownership of the site and its on-line nature. The great majority of negative comments were about the loss of green space and the desire to retain wild, publicly accessible green space. Whilst the building of a university campus was not rated as highly as environmental options for the use of Birley Fields, the resident run consultation reported that support for such developments were higher than for commercial or business developments. Some positive comments were posted and these included appreciation of the ASDA vouchers included as part of the consultation process, and the potential benefits to local businesses and jobs in the future.

Several of the comments posted on the resident led consultation, reinforce some of the questions that were asked in the Environmental Sustainability workshop (there is likely to have been overlapping membership of the different groups). These included questions as to how building a car park sits with a sustainability agenda; whether any consideration had been given to occupying vacant office space at the end of Birley fields or renovating the derelict Nia Centre, both of which might have reflected environmental concerns more than new buildings on the remaining green space.

³ see <http://manchesterpermaculturenetwork.howcreative.co.uk/taxonomy/term/276> for the *Our Hulme* on-line survey

Resident opposition to the development also reflects worries that a greater concentration of students living in the area will lead to a disproportionate number of residents with no long term commitment to the area. It is recognised that Hulme has always accommodated students, but there is a strongly held view that a 'tipping point' has been reached and that the locality is in greater need of more affordable housing than student accommodation (*Manchester Mule*, 2009). The argument put forward by the University that the provision of more dedicated student accommodation within the development would release currently student occupied housing for other residents has not convinced everyone. According to the Masterplan:

New student accommodation will be provided as part of the consolidation process through the development of purpose-built managed halls. This will help alleviate pressure on more traditional family housing through directing students to managed accommodation. (MCC 2009a:6 reproduced in Driver Jonas, 2009:2)

It is clear from comments from a minority of residents about the proposal on resident networking sites⁴ that there is deep suspicion of the Council, due to prior experience in developing the area. To some degree it appears that MMU is being linked to the Council and is also therefore to be treated with suspicion. This became clear when a private developer proposed building another student accommodation block close by Birley Fields and residents took a lot of persuading that this was nothing to do with MMU.

*Statement on Manor Property announcement: No link to Birley.
Manchester Metropolitan University and Manchester City Council would like to clarify that their plans for a 'community campus' on Birley Fields in Hulme are not linked to plans by Manor Property Services for a halls of residence complex in Coupland Street, adjacent to the University of Manchester. (MMU Press release, 14 January 2010 and placed on website)*

The visibility of assertive views from a minority of residents, along with the level of response through the MMU consultation, is a reminder that communities are complex with different groupings holding diverse views on local issues. No one group is able (or ever would be able) to speak for the rest and the challenge for all those involved in the development will be to find ways of hearing and engaging those silent voices of the majority.

Review of consultation process

Notwithstanding questions about whether all the different interest groups in Hulme had been consulted, 835 questionnaire responses to the MMU consultation were received, including 213 web responses and 612 written responses (Driver Jonas, 2009). It is not known how many responses received through the different channels were repeated responses.

Most of the community consultation took place in relation to the Masterplan – people were asked their opinions about features of the development that had already been proposed. This is one kind of consultation, and of its kind was focused, undertaken quickly and was well executed and genuine attempts were made to be inclusive. The Community Consultation Statement (Driver Jonas, 2009) incorporates different

⁴ Comments from flickr postings are linked into 'Our Hulme'. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Hulme-Residents-Online-Group/> (Hulme Residents Online Group)

'Our Hulme' Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=138962016212>

perspectives in its analysis and summary and does not appear to privilege particular viewpoints. However, the consultation was not an exercise in *engaged* planning or *collaborative* decision making: it is limited in the extent to which it was an exercise in participation (see below).

What changed as a result of the consultation?

The Driver Jonas report of the consultation records that the overwhelming majority of views expressed through the consultation were positive with people welcoming the development. Some concerns were addressed through conversations held during the events and explanations were made possible with staff attending consultation events.

Unsurprisingly, given the history of development and resident concerns in Hulme, anxieties over the loss of green space and for environmental preservation featured strongly. Questions about continued rights of way through the campus were raised.

Some concern was expressed by consultees regarding public rights of way. One consultee commented:

“I’m concerned about the public rights of way being legally protected to ensure the University does not change its mind in 10-15 years.”

Consultees who voiced this concern were assured that the University campus was a community campus which would be permeable and accessible to everyone. (Driver Jonas, 2009:31).

There is a paradox here as current University ‘publicly accessible’ locations are not fully permeable and accessible and this has been pointed out to senior managers from the University during the ‘Hulme Walks’ (see Working Paper 3, Kagan and Duggan, 2010c).

Extract 6 shows signs that indicate no public right of access to what members of the public might justifiably think are public spaces.

It is not obvious how plans for the Birley Fields development have been altered as a result of the consultation. The process led, though, to broadening understanding within the University of some of the concerns and priorities of local people. The evaluation of the consultation suggests that there might be ways in which influence on the development can be brought to bear.

The key themes have been identified and the comments and concerns of the various consultees highlighted to enable MMU to address issues as the development plans progress...The various suggestions are currently being considered by MMU and proposals will be presented within the ongoing process of community engagement.(Driver Jonas, 2009:38, 39)

If this is so, some of the anxieties that the consultation would not lead anywhere would be alleviated. The residents of some BME communities expressed this anxiety during the consultation:

The local BME residents in particular, have seen developments before and have seen the barriers to local jobs and involvement stay despite the rhetoric of inclusion. (Driver Jonas 2009:35)

Extract 6: Signage indicating limits of public access through All Saints Campus



Above: Notice on entrance to the archway of Cavendish Building that has bared access between Stretford Road and All Saints. Notice reads: *Private Land no right of Way*. The sign below is a warning sign of video surveillance. Next to this sign is a blue pedestrian and cyclist shared access sign.

Below: Entrance to Grosvenor Square (All Saints Park). Notices read: *This park is open to the public during the day, but will be closed in the evenings. NO DOGS NO BALL GAMES*. On a nearby tree is another notice warning of the presence of surveillance cameras.



However, there is an element of contradiction on the response outlined in the consultation report to one of the issues arising from the process. Many consultees identified sports facilities as a priority for inclusion in the new campus build. It seems this has already been dismissed and will not be taken up.

Despite the large number of consultees that have requested the provision of sporting facilities, the research conducted by MMU and MCC has demonstrated that the two wards of Hulme and Moss Side are already well provided with sports facilities. It would therefore be difficult to justify investment that might only serve to undermine take-up of existing facilities. In addition, the benefits that could be derived from the inclusion of other 'missing' facilities within the community could be of even greater benefit. (Driver Jonas 2009: 38)

There is no elaboration of the 'research' mentioned in this statement. However this kind of issue is just the kind to increase community scepticism about the good intentions of MMU and MCC in relation to community consultation. Commissioning

further research (preferably undertaken by members of the community) into why so many people identified sporting activities to be part of the development, or what was inadequate in existing sports facilities, would have been a more empowering approach and might have led to other solutions than such a quick dismissal of the views. Again the question 'could *this have been done in a way to extend benefits to local people?*' is pertinent.

We have described the planning and consultation stages as limited in terms of engagement⁵, involvement and participation of the community. It is worth examining what is meant by community participation.

Involvement and participation

There are various ways of understanding participation (Cornwall, 2008). The international Association of Public Participation presents a spectrum of public participation. Table 1 illustrates this spectrum and highlights those parts reached by the Masterplanning and Consultation processes.

Table 1: Spectrum of public participation (IAP2, see Brodie et al., 2009:17)

Increasing level of participation					
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	Provide balanced objective information to assist in understanding a problem, alternatives, opportunities and solutions	Obtain public feedback on problem analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	Partner with the public on each aspect of decision making including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	Place final decision making in the hands of the public
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced decisions	We will work with you to ensure your aspirations and concerns are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. We will implement what you decide.	We will implement what you decided
Examples:	Fact sheets Web sites Open houses	Public comment Focus groups Surveys Public meetings	Workshops Deliberative polling Future search conferences Open space technology Planning for real Collaborative planning groups	Citizen advisory committees Consensus building Participatory decision making Community empowerment networks	Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decision making
MMU community consultation and communications about Birley Field			Greater involvement of key stakeholders in the development and implementation of Birley Fields campus		

⁵ Since the consultation and draft of this report was written the Coalition Government established in May 2010 has disbanded the Regional Development Agencies. There is now some uncertainty about the consequent reduction in funding available for the development and its implications for the community engagement dimension of the work.

This spectrum is based on Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation in which she argues that the earlier stages of informing and consulting amount to tokenism and cannot really be called participation. The bulk of the Masterplanning and Consultation processes have been to inform and consult.

In Extract 7 we reproduce the articulation of Arnstein's ladder, drawn from one of the few discussions about how community involvement in university linked developments might become more meaningful. The development under consideration was that of Newcastle's Science Central, and van Winden (2009) urges that community participation must extend beyond the levels of tokenism. Given the history of contested community involvement in developments in Hulme, it might be advisable here, too, to look beyond tokenistic involvement, and there is some evidence, to be documented in later reports, that this is beginning to happen.

Extract 7: Articulation of Arnstein's ladder of participation (van Winden, 2009).

Degrees of Citizen Power:

Citizen Control: participants & residents control a programme or an institution, govern policy and managerial aspects, and negotiate the conditions under which outsiders can make changes

Delegated Power: negotiations occur between citizens & public officials which give citizens the power to make decisions and control plans & programmes

Partnership: power is redistributed through negotiation between citizens and power holders, agreeing to share planning & decision-making

Degrees of Tokenism:

Placation: ground rules allow the 'have-nots' to advise, but decision-making power lies elsewhere. The successful appeasement of the citizenry depends on the quality of technical support available to express their priorities & the extent to which community is organized to argue for them

Consultation: inviting citizens' opinions (surveys, meetings etc.); power holders are thereby able to show they have attempted to involve them

Informing: advising citizens of their rights, responsibilities & options. Often one-way communication (from officials to citizens) with no means for citizens to express their opinions and no power to negotiate

Non participation:

Cynical Consultation: power-holders involve citizens in extensive activity, but the focus is on 'curing' them of their 'pathology' instead of changing the social structures which create their 'pathologies'

Civic Hype: citizens are arranged on advisory committees or Boards merely to 'educate' them or to get their support. Participation becomes distorted into the power holders' public relations instrument

We are suggesting that MMU has, in the main, focused on informing and consulting. We do not intend to criticise MMU for doing what it set out to do – inform and consult, but care must be taken not to claim too much from these processes. The degree of involvement has varied with stakeholder group. Some stakeholders (Councillors and

Ward Coordinators for example) have been more deeply involved than residents and university staff. In turn, residents and other community stakeholders have been more deeply involved than university staff. The differential participation of different stakeholders is also in evidence in other regeneration processes, and as have seen in Working Paper 1 (Kagan and Duggan, 2010a), the process followed in this development has closely resembled those of other waves of regeneration, reflecting the Manchester model. For the future, it might be useful to consider whether deeper and more meaningful participation would be of mutual benefit in the long run and a different model of community engagement for regeneration be tried within Manchester. This is not to down play the efforts MMU has made to engage different parties in ways that it has not previously done with developments, and for Senior staff to go beyond giving information and listen to the views of local people, beyond the formal consultation.

[The senior staff in the University] are very responsive. ... people have been given one to one audiences with senior teams. ... the senior team have made themselves incredibly available through these walks that we have been doing led by one of our academics ... the senior team have all fed back saying how very challenging it is ... [but] we've walked with them through the history of the area and been prepared to listen to the history of the area and [residents have] seen us doing it. ... I think that has been great for just demonstrating that we are interested in that community [and at very senior levels are] prepared to listen to its history and prepared to talk to anyone ... (Senior Manager interview, 4.5.10)

Thus to a limited extent the MMU consultation has gone beyond information giving. An engaged university, though, interfaces with its communities in more complex ways, through various partnerships and forms of two way involvement. The partnership through these early planning stages has been at a strategic level, and this has enabled top level commitment to the proposals and a secure financial commitment to be secured. Other collaborations and partnerships have begun and will be overviewed in Working Paper 3 (Kagan and Duggan, 2010c).

Conclusion

Within a short period of time a Masterplan was produced and a strategic partnership had been formed that was highly appreciated on all sides.

The Masterplanning process missed opportunities to engage local expertise in, for example, urban planning and design.

There was minimal engagement of the community in the development of the Masterplan.

A number of different channels were used to give information about the development on an ongoing basis, particularly by MMU but also by MCC.

Little information extending awareness about everyday events in Hulme has been made available to staff in the University.

Local people have not been involved in organising and conducting the communications activities but have developed a number of on line groups for discussing the developments.

Greater involvement in all parts of the process will contribute to social aspects of sustainable development.

A large public consultation event took place over a period of 12 weeks and the responses more or less reflected the Hulme and Moss Side populations.

Opportunities were missed to specifically seek views from the silent majority, and members of a wide range of interest and 'outcast' communities: care will be needed to ensure the strongest voices are not just those of men.

A sustainability workshop was held in acknowledgement of the local environmental interests, and requests for meetings with specific residents' alliances were met.

An active minority of residents have expressed their opposition to the developments reflecting the complexity of different interests and the future challenge is to enable the silent majority to have a voice.

It is not clear how issues raised in the consultation will be responded to and there are some indications of residents' views not being explored further prior to being dismissed.

When viewed as processes of participation, the Masterplanning and consultation processes were found to have been at the tokenistic end of a spectrum of public participation.

Some paradoxes and contradictions within the consultation process have been identified and care will be needed not to feed local cynicism regarding how their voices will be listened to in the development.

There is evidence of a willingness on the part of senior staff in the University to listen, and go beyond information-giving consultation in novel ways.

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Appendix 1: Timeline of activities: engagement, development, consultation

Date	Activity
December 2008	2,500 people vote for 6 Public Engagement \Fellowship projects: focus on Hulme and Moss Side and all in partnership with local projects and people
February 2009	Birley Fields Newsletter Issue 1 (joint MMU MCC)
April 2009	Roger Tym and Partners Impact Assessment Report (commissioned MMU and MCC)
June 2009	Strategic development Framework/Masterplan published
June 17 th 2009	Invited meeting for staff and students living in the area
June 17 th 2009	Premier of Moving Memories: Tales of Moss Side and Hulme, Afwe Pub (NW Film Archive PE Fellow)
June 24 th 2009	Report to MCC Executive for approval: revised framework for Birley Fields, centred around the creation of a new MMU campus. Approval pending community consultation
June 25 th 2009	Website on line: including Masterplan, consultation questionnaire, FAQs, further reports added over time
June 29 th 2009	Invited community stakeholder meeting
June-July 2009	Internal MMU briefing meetings held Didsbury, Elizabeth Gaskell, All Saints, Crewe
July 1-Sept 26 th	12 week community consultation: 40 events with MMU staff and Birley Fields Master Plan exhibition supported by posters, leaflets, information boards
July 1- Sept 26 th	Consultation questionnaire: 13000 information leaflets and questionnaires distributed to households and public services and other venues. 835 questionnaires returned (213 internet and 612 written responses)
July 2009	Birley Fields Newsletter Issue 2 (joint MMU MCC)
July 16 th	Consultation with students at Manchester Academy (n=16)
July 16 th -18 th	Hulme Sweet Hulme Exhibition, Zion Centre (Art and Design PE Fellow)
July 22 nd	Consultation event attended by representatives of BME communities, Moss Side Leisure Centre
July 22 nd	Drop in session for Business owners, Zion Centre
September 7 th	Consultation with Hulme Alliance (n=22)
September 12 th	Communities for Change event (Institute of Education

	and Homes For Change, Hulme)
September 14 th	Consultation Moss Side Residents' Association (n = 45)
September 16 th	Consultation Homes for Change/Work for Change (n=25)
September 22 nd	Environmental sustainability workshop
September 24 th	Consultation Loreto College
October 2009	Birley Fields Newsletter Issue 3 (joint MMU MCC)
October 2009	Community consultation statement (Drivers Jonas)
September 2009	Longitudinal research studies on education and quality of life commissioned for first year.
November 2009	Beacons Fellows Celebration Event PE fellows and community partners
December 8 th 2009	Architects appointed
February 12 - 28 th	Lost Hulme Exhibition Zion Centre (Dept History students)
February - May 2010	Hulme Walking Tours
March 13-April 1 st	Lost Hulme Exhibition Central Library
March 25 th 2010	Web bulletin: Confirmation of funding for Birley Fields project
Early 2010	Wide consultation and involvement in preparing MMU statements linked to the Welling review

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