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Manchester State of Play Study



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the current situation of Area Based Collaborative Entrepreneurship (ABCE) in Manchester, United Kingdom. First, the report identifies underlying structural problems in the UK and Manchester, which underpin Manchester's involvement in the ABCE Cities Project, and provides an analysis of existing support for ABCE in the Manchester area. The report then considers the historical and existing policy context and instruments concerning ABCE, both nationally in the UK, regionally at a Greater Manchester level, and at the local municipal level in Manchester. Finally, the report identifies gaps in current policy and barriers to the formation of effective ABCE in Manchester, which the municipality is attempting to address through INTERREG ABCE Cities Project.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ABCE PROJECT

In many European cities, local entrepreneurs join forces in new types of collective ventures, in order to pursue common interests: business development and a more attractive business environment. In such collectives, entrepreneurs engage in shared investments, collective branding of their urban district, improving shared public space, etc. Local government is beginning to recognize the value of such collectives in terms of adding capacity to efforts to improve places, and is developing policy measures to facilitate them. This rising phenomenon of ABCE is a possible solution to the challenges caused by structural forces such as economic restructuring, globalization, socio-economic changes in labour market, austerity, and the challenges of everyday place development.

Shared action offers benefits in terms of job creation and competitiveness. Moreover, it fosters local value capturing and regeneration since local collaborative enterprises are often strongly intertwined with their neighbourhood, and committed to social goals, such as strengthening neighbourhood liveability, or reinforcing social ties between local stakeholders. Fostering collaborative entrepreneurship thus can support inclusive growth, cooperation and cohesion.

This project, therefore, aims to exchange knowledge on how ABCE can more effectively be facilitated with local and regional policy instruments. In current Regional Structural Programs, the emphasis on innovation, access to funding, overshadows the importance of networked and locally anchored entrepreneurship for inclusive growth. By capturing the local learnings systematically, identifying

critical success conditions and sharing these across regions in Europe, improvements in policies that foster ABCE can be made. The project will deliver important recommendations for improving the policy instruments in European regions, harnessing collective entrepreneurship as an effective means to improve SME competitiveness and urban development.

Four European urban regions are involved in this project: Amsterdam, Vilnius, Conurbation Varaždin - Čakovec, and Athens. These places currently experiment with ABCE and are looking for inspiration on how to initiate, facilitate, support and monitor it. They initiated this project to share experiences, to gain deeper insights into the effectiveness and efficiency of their policies, and to develop and share policy guidelines.

In Manchester, the Institute of Place Management (IPM) and Manchester City Council (MCC) are working in partnership to investigate how the municipality can best support ABCE as a catalyst for revitalising the city's neighbourhood or District Centres as a strategy that may unlock the potential of district centres to reinvent themselves as liveable multifunctional places. However, as it stands developing appropriate policy support for effective area based collaboration sits uncomfortably in existing policy frameworks.

The ABCE programme aligns, therefore with *Our Manchester*¹, a strategy that sets out a framework for actions by public sector organisations, businesses, the voluntary sector and communities, as the Manchester grapples with the challenge to public service delivery produced by austerity. One ambition of *Our Manchester* is to “create thriving neighbourhoods where people can have a sense of purpose and belonging” and to foster a sense of identity and heritage of local neighbourhoods. The overall aim of this programme, therefore, is to develop new evidence-based policy to support the development of ABCE within Manchester's district centres, with consideration of future policy both in terms of local policy (e.g. through the emerging Local Plan) or on a wider scale in influencing Government policy.

¹ https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/6426/the_manchester_strategy

SECTION 2: UNDERLYING STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS IN MANCHESTER

The section first provides an overview of underpinning research on area-based collaborative enterprise through a review of research on local agglomeration economies and the related state-led strategies for local economic development. Second, this section introduces the ‘new economic thinking’, to discuss the re-ignition of ideas concerning local wealth circulation emergent in the UK. Finally, discusses the structural problems underlying Manchester’s recent economic development, which relate to fostering area-based collaborative enterprise.

THE GROWTH OF AREA BASED COLLOBARTIVE ENTERPRISE

ABCE has been subject to numerous academic studies, especially in the field of Economic Geography, with substantive literature emerging in the early 1980s concerning new forms of business agglomeration and networking. Subsequently, there a number of analytical frameworks focusing on understanding how co-located businesses network and collaborate within a specific geographical area at different scales (see Table 1 below). The notion of *indigenous* local economic development broadly connects these examples; a scenario whereby locally anchored capital and labour drives sustained place based economic growth, in contradistinction to *exogenous* development, where places are more reliant on attracting external intrusions of private investment.

Table 1

Underpinning Literature	Examples from the literature
Cluster and Network Theory	Storper and Venables, 2004
Cultural Quarters	Montgomery, 2003
Flexible Specialisation	Piore and Sabel, 1984
Institutional Thickness	Amin and Thrift, 1992; Barnes and Gertler, 2002
Learning Regions	Florida, 1995
Neo-Marshallian Networks	Amin and Thrift, 1992
New Industrial Districts	Markusen, 1996
New Logic of Agglomeration	Sassen, 2005
Regional Innovation Systems	Braczyk, Cooke, and Heidenreich, 1998

Broadly framed within discussions of late 20th century global restructuring and the transition from (Fordist) mass production to flexible (post-Fordist) accumulation strategies, this literature demonstrates the significance of locally agglomerated business networks in driving local and regional economic competitiveness. Classic cases include Silicon Valley (USA) and The Third Italy (Italy), although numerous other places share similar characteristics. In the UK, for example, regional clusters emerged in the 1980s, such as The M4 Corridor (London to Bristol), Silicon Fen (Cambridgeshire), and Motor Sport Valley (Home Counties). In addition, similar clusters have arisen in an urban context, such as financial and producer services in central London, and creative clusters in several major cities. These agglomerations are characterised by intense networking between many co-located small firms. Such clusters have become globally competitive through synergies generated through business-to-business exchange, which enable the rapid diffusion of knowledge and innovation, the generation of economies and scope, and the flexibility to respond with agility to dynamic market conditions. Typically, clusters not only possess strong internal connectivity, but also have strong connections to global networks and markets.

Of central concern is local ownership of capital, how firms embedded within spatial agglomerations retain power and control over decision-making, in contradistinction to models of regional development dependent on inward investment. Markusen (1996) aptly describes this tension through the notion of *slippery places* i.e. places where capital and labour might easily flow in, but can easily flow out again subject to the vagaries of remote decision-making by distant corporate entities. She contrasts this with *sticky places*, places that tend to retain and embed skills and investment as the basis of sustained growth. Strengthening local ownership of capital, therefore, provides an opportunity for countering the inequalities produced by global transnational networks and breaking a dependency on external investment. Consequently, creating the conditions to support the development of similar networking culture in declining industrial regions and cities, therefore, is an attractive proposition for municipalities and regional state authorities.

However, owing to long-term structural deficiencies, many regions in the UK have proved resistant to the formation of similar forms of area-based collaboration, notably former industrial cities. North West England and Greater Manchester, for example, became low-capacity regions in terms of small business formation and networking, a structural consequence of deindustrialisation (see below).

Since the 1970s, to address uneven spatial economic development, lagging regions instead opted for *exogenous* strategies predicated on attracting inward investment. Whereas this may have produced sustained economic growth in certain places, both the distribution of investment and its long-term sustainability is currently disputed. As a result, the distribution of effective and significant place-based clusters remains highly uneven across the UK.

THE NEW ECONOMIC THINKING

Markusen's ideas continue to chime with contemporary debates in the UK through "The New Economic Thinking"². In an age of austerity and post-Brexit uncertainty, many municipalities are starved of investment, and beginning to experiment with alternative models of local economic development, engaging think tanks such as Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), and the New Economics Foundation (NEF). In short, these ideas concern how the extent agents of local change can shift the balance of their local economy from systems that extract value from local economies, to those that generate and circulate value within a locality. Notable is CLES' Preston Model³, which ties the municipality's procurement strategy to local companies and worker co-operatives in an effort to reduce leakages from the local economy. Another key concept is the Foundational Economy⁴, which challenges the prioritisation of business support for high-tech growth, and instead calls for greater focus on supporting *the mundane production of everyday necessities ... goods and services consumed by all (regardless of income and status) because they support everyday life*. Hence, interest has been reignited in policies to support the strengthening place based anchors through community ownership of land and property assets, social enterprise and cooperatives, cross sector partnerships between place based anchors or other embedded local stakeholders (local government, health institutions, universities, civic organisations), and ties with locally embedded SMEs committed to places. Consequently, many municipalities within the UK are beginning to entertain the notion of place-based development, evident in the increasing number of *Place Directors* within local administration.

² <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/jun/25/the-new-left-economics-how-a-network-of-thinkers-is-transforming-capitalism>

³ <https://cles.org.uk/tag/the-preston-model/>

⁴ <https://foundationaleconomycom.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/wp131.pdf>

CHALLENGES IN LINKING THEORY TO DISTRICT CENTRE REVITALISATION

Despite successful examples of local economic development undergirded by area-based collaborative enterprise, there remain inadequacies in both theory and policy support:

1. An overwhelming number of studies are sector, rather than place based. Consequently, a great deal is understood about how firms collaborate within specific industries and their associated supply-chains, whereas the drivers of co-located and horizontal inter-firm collaboration across multiple sectors remains under-researched, together with their interactions with non-business stakeholders and other place-based anchors.
2. The contribution of contemporary forms of collaborative enterprise to place development remains unclear. Other than emergent research on Business Improvement Districts, and in certain cases cultural clusters, how ABCE can lead to improvement in the local business environment remains neglected. Rather place quality is often reduced to a pre-existing attribute within business clusters, rather than being treated as an outcome in its own right.
3. Existing research tends to focus on regional or citywide networks. Perhaps only research on cultural clusters has attempted to understand local collaboration at a district scale. The neighbourhood scale in particular, therefore, remain almost completely neglected.
4. Although there is substantial public policy support for SME development in the UK and Europe, this often targets high-tech start-ups and cultural industries, whereas traditional, low-tech SMEs remain unsupported. This is especially the case for retail, which receive no support. This brings into question the effectiveness of the existing business support infrastructure and its ability to support the capacity of traditional small businesses to contribute to place-based change.
5. In the UK, regional initiatives such as the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), led by Mayoral Combined Authorities or Local Enterprise Partnerships, promote strategic alliances and co-ordination between government and the business sector, it remains unclear how regional policy instruments supports place-based small-business networks.

6. The impact of the apparent shift to place-based approaches within local government remains under-researched. Whereas this connects to the broader tendency towards more blended forms of ownership and collaboration in local arrangements for economic development, because it is a new type of intervention, there remains concern emerging networked and locally anchored types of initiatives that promote inclusive growth, innovation and regeneration are poorly supported at a local scale. There is concern there remains a lack of capacity and knowledge of what constitutes place-based development. At worst, the shift to place-centric approaches may only signal a surface change, without any significant institutional or policy reform.

Given the types of agglomeration found in traditional high streets and town centres, which include retail, leisure, commercial services, small producers and other place-based non-business anchors and stakeholders, the frailties exposed in the existing knowledge creates a particular challenge in terms of understanding the revitalisation of high streets and district centres.

This is especially pertinent in a UK and Greater Manchester context, which is experiencing an acute period of retail restructuring, which is beginning to affect the sustainability of traditional centres. This local context, however, needs also to account for broader economic restructuring, deindustrialisation in the 1970s, and the recent trends in the retail sector, which has brought into question the role of town centres and high streets across the United Kingdom. The next section, therefore, outlines the structural challenges affecting this specific context.

MANCHESTER AND AREA BASED COLLABORATION

Given the region's industrial heritage, it is not without irony the City of Manchester is currently concerned with promoting place-based business networks and collaboration. In the 19th century, Manchester acted as the commercial centre for the South East Lancashire industrial region, an area subject to Alfred Marshall's⁵ observations about the economic benefits arising from the synergy generated within spatially agglomerated business networks within the textiles industry. Marshall described characterised a place of intense networking between many small co-located firms. He observed distinct place based clusters, each specialising in different stages of production, positioned around Manchester, the central commercial and distribution hub of the network. This agglomeration enabled rapid business-to-business exchanges to occur, including knowledge exchange and untraded interdependencies, providing firms within the network with an international competitive edge. Importantly, co-location facilitated rapid technological and knowledge diffusion, with latest advances in machinery and business organisation quickly adopted throughout the network. Over time, informal governance structures emerged, with firms collaborating to achieve grander objectives, which brought improvements to both the trading environment and place, such as a canal and railway infrastructure, which ultimately connected Manchester to international trading routes. Manchester businesses also helped to establish institutions of higher-level learning and skills, the antecedents of the city's two universities, and to create places of art and culture. Importantly, with many businesses locally owned, power and control sat within the region, with owners of local capital and property assets retaining a stake in supporting wider place development. The conditions underpinning the competitive advantages derived from this network, were difficult to replicate elsewhere, enabling Manchester to dominate the international textiles industry by the turn of the 20th century. In summary, Alfred Marshall was describing the world's original industrial district. However, the conditions that produced the "shock city"⁶ of the 19th century, also created swathes of poor housing, pollution and abject poverty, and many of Manchester's contemporary urban and economic problems have their legacy in this phase of unregulated industrial growth.

⁵ Marshall (1890)

⁶ Briggs (1963)

DEINDUSTRIALISATION AND THE DECLINE OF AREA BASED COLLABORATION

Throughout the 20th century, the characteristics of Manchester's Marshallian network began to erode through vertical integration and increasing firm size. Inward investment also resulted in a loss of local control, which the region becoming increasingly subject to remote-decision making by businesses located outside the region. Manchester's built environment and infrastructure degraded, becoming barriers to new investment, and city began to experience capital flight, with textiles ending or moving overseas. During the 1970s, Greater Manchester experienced an accelerated period of deindustrialisation, losing 175,000 manufacturing jobs in 10 years. By the early 1980s, dereliction and polluted brown-field sites blighted Manchester's landscape, with a population experiencing mass unemployment and the associated social and health problems, producing a generational legacy continuing to haunt the city. Initial attempts to address these problems in the post-war period through state-led mass redevelopment resulted in clearances of entire neighbourhoods, together with traditional street forms and neighbourhood layouts, and led to de-densification of the urban core, a planning legacy, which continues to affect attempts to restore vibrancy and vitality to neighbourhoods in the city.

This decline also revealed a structural problem within North West England, which by 1984 had one of lowest rates of new firm formation in the UK⁷, with Greater Manchester standing accused of "lacking enterprise makers"⁸. Although the North West has recovered somewhat, ONS data from 2016 reveals the North West lags significantly behind London and South East in terms of new firm formation, with the number of new businesses created in London double that of the region. In short, the region has not sufficiently replaced firms lost over the course of the late 20th century. Big business, retail concentration and big government appears to have crowded out the potential for SME growth, with employment becoming absorbed into large corporate structures. During the post-war period, the growing significance of the local state appears to have fostered a culture of paternalism and state dependency, which has mitigated against local entrepreneurial initiatives. Relatively high unemployment and relatively low levels of property ownership has also restricted opportunities for individuals to finance new business start-ups.

⁷ Whittington (1984)

⁸ Lloyd and Mason (1984)

The generation affected most by deindustrialisation is also associated with low levels of skills and educational attainment. It is perhaps not surprising to learn that local people now aged 50-64 are less likely to be engaged in employment, never mind enterprise development. Consequently, there remains significant barriers to the promotion of SME development in Manchester across most sectors, although the geography is highly uneven.

Since the 1980s, with the advent of Thatcherism, Manchester changed its approach to local economic development, becoming an exemplar of neoliberal property-led regeneration. Since the 1990s, central Manchester emerged as the largest employment centre outside London, with significant growth of independent businesses in the cultural, media and leisure economy. The city-centre has also benefitted from housing densification and a repopulation of the centre. Outside the downtown, however, new business and employment growth is patchy, producing a highly uneven and polarised pattern of local economic development. In the context of austerity, Manchester now faces a major challenge in terms of rebalancing growth.

AUSTERITY AND 'OUR MANCHESTER'

Austerity measures introduced by the Coalition government in 2010 has led to severe cuts to public spending across the UK. This has caused a disproportionate impact on cities and more deprived areas, with local authorities like Manchester, experiencing a 49% reduction in budget. Consequently, local government has faced difficult decisions in terms of spending priorities, with cuts to non-statutory services, and diminished capacity in terms of staffing, expertise and funding across all aspects of service delivery. With central state support receding, Manchester anticipates fiscal devolution and the localisation of business rates will eventually support the city's financial sustainability in the long term. Nevertheless, public services, the voluntary sector and communities had have to adapt and find new ways of working within this new financial landscape. To respond to this challenge, in 2014 Manchester established a Leaders Forum, a group drawn from stakeholders across the city, to develop a long-term vision for Manchester. The outcome, *Our Manchester*⁹, is a strategic document, which sets out a framework for actions by public sector organisations, businesses, the voluntary sector and communities and forms the backdrop to the Manchester's

⁹ https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/6426/the_manchester_strategy

involvement in the ABCE Project, as the municipality grapples with the wider challenge to public service delivery.

One ambition of *Our Manchester* is to “create thriving neighbourhoods where people can have a sense of purpose and belonging” and to foster a sense of identity and heritage of local neighbourhoods. With diminished state support, there is an expectation that communities and business will need to foster greater responsibility for their neighbourhoods, working collaboratively with the municipality to deliver neighbourhood change, with the onus for centre management shifting from the municipality to local collectives. Achieving this objective, however, poses a challenge, as existing policy guidance to support the development and maintenance of networking capacity within local centres is limited, and embedded in planning processes and regulation (see Local Policy context below). Ideally, new policy to inform the management of neighbourhood centres needs to shift from planning and development control into broader service delivery structures, which promotes cross-sector collaboration within internal structures of the municipality, and joint delivery through local networks and partnerships involving local organisations and anchor institutions.

RETAIL RESTRUCTURING AND REGENERATING DISTRICT CENTRES AND HIGH STREETS

Existing economic development strategy for Greater Manchester recognises the strategic importance of the city centre, town, district and neighbourhood centres, as key agglomerations of growth in retail, leisure, and heritage sectors. Historically, retail not only serves local residents and employees, but also acts as a key attractor for visitors and tourists. Over the last decade, however, the retail sector in the UK has experienced a radical transformation, resulting in the collapse of many established national multiples and store closures. Retail employment is falling, and many centres are blighted by high vacancy rates. Footfall on many high streets has declined significantly over the last 10 years (by almost 20% since 2009), and the percentage spend on retailing in traditional town centres is declining (from almost 50% in 2000 to around 37%). According to the Centre for Retail Research, 13,248 stores closed between 2008 and the first half of 2019, resulting in 204,914 job losses. The North West region has been particularly affected, recording amongst the highest levels of net store closure.

The reasons for this are well-rehearsed, but in summary, retail footfall has shifted to out-of-town shopping destination, and online retail penetration in the UK is the highest in Europe (18% of all sales in 2019). In addition, the retail sector is highly concentrated (70% of retail sales are generated by just 100 large companies), making it difficult for independents to compete on price, and leaving consumers with poor choice. Since the 1980s, the UK planning system accommodated an over-expansion of retail space at a time when consumer behaviour was changing. Consequently, as retail pushed out alternative uses (commercial, leisure, and housing) many towns became mainly dependent on shopping as the primary reason for people to visit their centres. The failure to adapt has produced some acute problems, although the impact of has been highly uneven. Whereas major city centres, like Manchester, have experienced a growth in footfall, with shopping just one of many activities that might attract people to the centre, smaller towns and cities have lost many shops, and other local services, leaving high vacancy rates. It is likely that many UK towns will not see traditional retail stores return, and that municipalities can no longer rely on retail expansion to underpin the revitalisation of centres.

VITAL AND VIABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

A key challenge in the UK over recent decades is how urban regeneration has become predicated on a conventional planning mechanism to promote private sector-led housing and commercial development on, sometimes underpinned by the use of public investment to lever investor interest. Whereas this model has proven effective in many towns and cities, in terms of physical development and the revalorisation of problematic brownfield sites, their remains concern to what extent this approach contributes to wider place development. With an absence of place management structures, site-specific physical regeneration projects may generate short-term commercial gain, but often fail to contribute to sustained and wider place improvement.

Nowhere is this more demonstrable than in the crisis affecting British high streets and town centres (explained above). As IPM research shows, factors such as maintaining good quality public realm, general appearance, or liveability are essential in terms of maintaining and growing the attractiveness of centres. Responsibility for these place-attributes, however, do not fall within the

remit of any single organisation. Rather, they require collective approach, involving government, business, and other place-based or anchor institutions. The development and management of successful places is also an on-going process. Having a strategy or vision is essential, but this must also connect to day-to-day place operations, such as maintenance or litter collection. With multiple stakeholders invested in town centres and high streets, creating and sustaining networks of plural ownership has proven to be a major challenge, because place development in the UK is synonymous with a silo-approach. This reflects how both national and local government is structured. Planning, housing, environment, transport, education and health, sit within separate administrative and delivery structures, with little crossover or cross-sector collaboration. Subsequently, whereas planning might be able to deliver vast new housing development, or flagship regeneration projects, it has consistently failed to integrate such interventions with places. Many of the UK's waterfront regeneration projects, for instance, stand out as "islands of regeneration", largely disconnected from their immediate localities. It is not surprising to learn, therefore, such developments have largely failed to mitigate structural inequalities within UK cities. Indeed, they may have actually contributed to widening social disparity, through processes such as gentrification.

As places are multi-faceted and complex, effective place management requires multiple and holistic measures. This means engaging existing businesses, service providers, community groups, and other actors at a spatial level that is meaningful to them, and working towards the formal integration of these partnerships into strategic economic development goals. Ultimately, there are limits to what individual initiatives can do for a place unless they are working collaboratively with other place-based stakeholders.

Place management partnerships or area based collaborative enterprises (such as Business Improvement Districts) are a recognised structure to deliver valuable place-based outcomes, such as inclusive growth, **but the current adoption of such structures is very low across Manchester**. There are examples where collective responses ownership has proven to be effective. Levenshulme Market is an example of a community enterprise model, which has developed and sustained an arts, craft and food market in an otherwise relatively deprived part of south Manchester. In the 1980s, the Northern Quarter Association provided an example of significant generator of change in central Manchester, linking over 300 creative businesses, which established a new cultural district in

a previously downgraded area of the city centre. Unfortunately, the network dissipated over time. Central Manchester now possesses both a retail BID and a city centre management company (CityCo), but similar forms of area-based collaboration is largely absent elsewhere in the city.

In 2016, Manchester City Council commissioned the Institute of Place Management (IPM) to undertake a pilot study of the city's District Centres, under a programme entitled Vital and Viable Neighbourhoods¹⁰. To provide oversight, Manchester City Council established a new District Centres Subgroup (answering to the Economic Scrutiny Committee). The aim of this work has been to:

- Develop a better, evidence-based understanding of the key factors the local authority and its partners can influence to create more vital and viable local centres
- Promote the creation of active collaborative partnerships in centres that are able to bring about positive change
- Monitor centre performance

The work is underpinned by research completed the IPM, High Street UK 2020¹¹, a knowledge exchange project completed in 2016 partially funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) who were concerned about the impact changes to retailing in the UK were having on town and city centres. The main outcome of this project were the identification of 25 priority interventions for centre management. Additionally, IPM research demonstrates the value of consistently and rigorously collecting and analysing footfall. This data reveals establish how centres function in terms there attractiveness, activity patterns and hours, as well as providing a tool for monitoring impact of interventions, and comparing centre performance. Consequently, the Manchester project replicates this methodology, through the installation of footfall counters in ten District Centres, and more in-depth work, conducting place management pilot studies in four places (Chorlton, Gorton, Harpurhey, and Northenden). In these cases, the IPM undertook place quality audits and stakeholder engagement workshops, to gather evidence to inform individual District Centre action plans. The action plans benchmark each centre against the IPM 25 priorities, and

¹⁰

<https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/documents/s3273/Vital%20and%20Viable%20Neighbourhoods%20Place%20Management%20Pilot%20s.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1753-8335/vol/10/iss/4>

provide each centre with a framework for achieving change, based on the IPM's 4Rs Framework (Repositioning, Reinventing, Rebranding, and Restructuring). The work generated recommendations for the City to consider in the development of new policy support for local centres:

- Targeted and place specific interventions to build local collaboration
- Increase local capacity to effect change in areas of the city where existing capacity is low
- Enhance existing local collaborative networks
- Share and monitor data on centre performance

INTERREG AND ABCE MANCHESTER

These recommendations underpin Manchester's involvement in the ABCE Cities project. Through working with four other cities in the European network supported by INTERREG, the municipality aims to learn more about what local government can do to stimulate the formation of area-based collectives, and to share its experience from the Vital and Viable Neighbourhoods work. As this project established, there is potential to promote new and blended forms of ABCE (which include other place-based stakeholders besides SMEs, which can work together to improve local environmental and trading conditions. This may involve the re-use of the abandoned sites, finding new uses for vacant units, storefront improvement, and other place-making interventions. In addition, there is potential to develop new synergies between place-based stakeholders and anchor institutions to attract or retain footfall in district centres through better co-ordination of activities (place branding, adjustments to activity hours, scheduling of events and festivals). The municipality, however, recognises that it needs to find better ways of delivering networking skills to support collaboration between co-located enterprises and other place-based stakeholders (health, education, housing, and community groups), and guidance on fostering foster stakeholder support and ownership. In addition, as this report as establishes below, existing policy concerning the development of District Centres contains little guidance on creating and nurturing effective policy instruments or delivery mechanisms. In addition, existing policy identifies key quantitative economic development outcomes, but **does not set out the value of effective area-based collaborations** to achieve these or measures to support them. Furthermore, there is **limited recognition of both the role of incumbent organisations and stakeholders in the mediation of how places change**, and the importance of embedding measures for change in local and regional development strategy.

Consequently, the Manchester element of the ABCE project aligns with INTERREG's focus on promoting SME competitiveness through generating the synergies, which can arise through enhanced clustering, local networks, and the creation of social capital within the business community. Broadly, Manchester aims to develop new policy guidance and instruments for the revitalisation of city's district centres, therefore, the focus of this project is to:

- Build local collaboration by enabling creating new interfaces between place-based stakeholders.
- Incorporate good practice and innovative solutions shared by project partners in the ABCE network
- Create a transferable toolkit of measures that can be applied to different places with different circumstances

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SECTION 3: PROJECT PARTNERS

Manchester is one of five partners on ABCitiEs project together with Amsterdam, Athens, Varaždin – Čakovec, and Vilnius. The individual project partners are:

1. Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
2. Municipality of Amsterdam
3. Mykolas Romeris University
4. Sunrise Valley Science and Technology Park
5. The Manchester Metropolitan University
6. Manchester City Council
7. University of Zagreb, Faculty of Organization and Informatics
8. City of Varaždin
9. City of Čakovec
10. Harokopio University
11. Athens municipality

DRAFT

SECTION 4: MANCHESTER CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

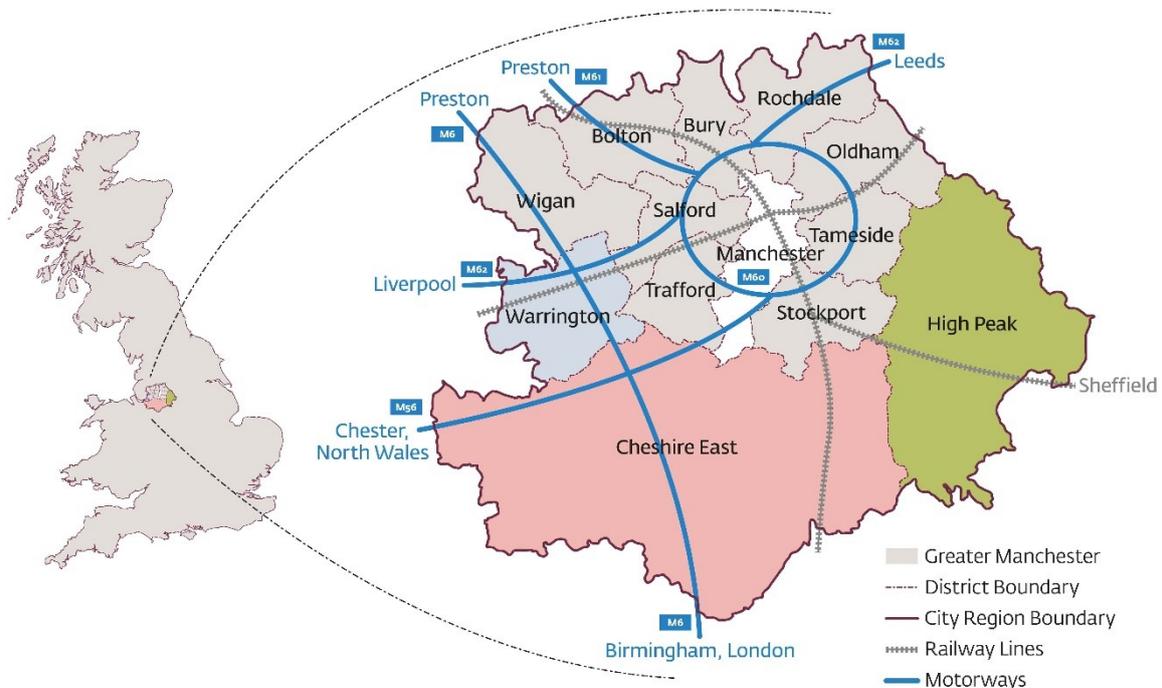
City of Manchester: overview

- Manchester is one ten municipalities within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Central Manchester lies at the heart of the UK second largest Travel-to-Work-Area (after London). With 47% growth between 2001-11, the Manchester TTWA was the fastest growing labour market area in the UK, supporting 1.2m jobs (4.1% of the UK total workforce)
- The Manchester TTWA is estimated to support 86,100 Micro enterprises, 18,700 SMEs, and 600 large businesses
- The city attracts 1.4m international visitors, the third most visited city destination in the UK after London and Edinburgh
- The city, however, remains ranked the 5th most deprived out 326 English local authorities

The Institute of Place Management, Manchester Metropolitan University

- Established in 1992, MMU is considered a modern-university, although the institution in its various formations can date its foundation back to 1824
- With 33,000 students, MMU is one the largest universities in the UK.
- The IPM is an externally facing professional body, located in one of the UK's largest Business Schools
- Formed in 2006, the IPM has become a leading international membership organisation supporting people committed to development, managing and making places.
- The IPM publishes its own journal, Place Management and Development
- The IPM undertakes academic and applied research, attracting over £10m funding since 2014.
- In 2018 the IPM helped establish The BID Foundation, a membership organisation for the UK's leading Business Improvement Districts
- In 2019, the IPM, working in partnership with PwC, was appointed to lead a national High Streets Taskforce for England.

Manchester is one of 10 municipalities, which make up the Greater Manchester region, located in North West England. The others includes Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. Greater Manchester has a combined population of 2.8m. In 2011, under a devolution deal, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) was established, with powers over public transport, skills, housing, regeneration, waste management, carbon neutrality and planning permission, and from 2016, new responsibilities for health and social care. In 2017, the GMCA gained an elected mayor. The individual municipalities, however, retain strong powers over planning and development. The Manchester City Region commonly refers to Greater Manchester, however, in 2011 the Greater Manchester Statutory City Region was created, as one of two pilot city regions in the UK (the other is Leeds City Region). This is a larger geographical area, encompassing the 10 municipalities of Greater Manchester, with five other local authorities (see Map 1 below), accommodating a population of 3.4m. This may eventually establish a formal corporate strategic government with powers comparable with the Greater London Authority, but it remains embryonic structure. Consequently, this report focuses on current governance and policy arrangements, where Greater Manchester forms the regional context, and Manchester the local.



Map 1: Greater Manchester City Region

In addition to Manchester City Centre, Greater Manchester has eight principal towns (see [Table 2](#) below) as well as around 20 smaller towns and over 50 further significant local and suburban centres.

Table 2

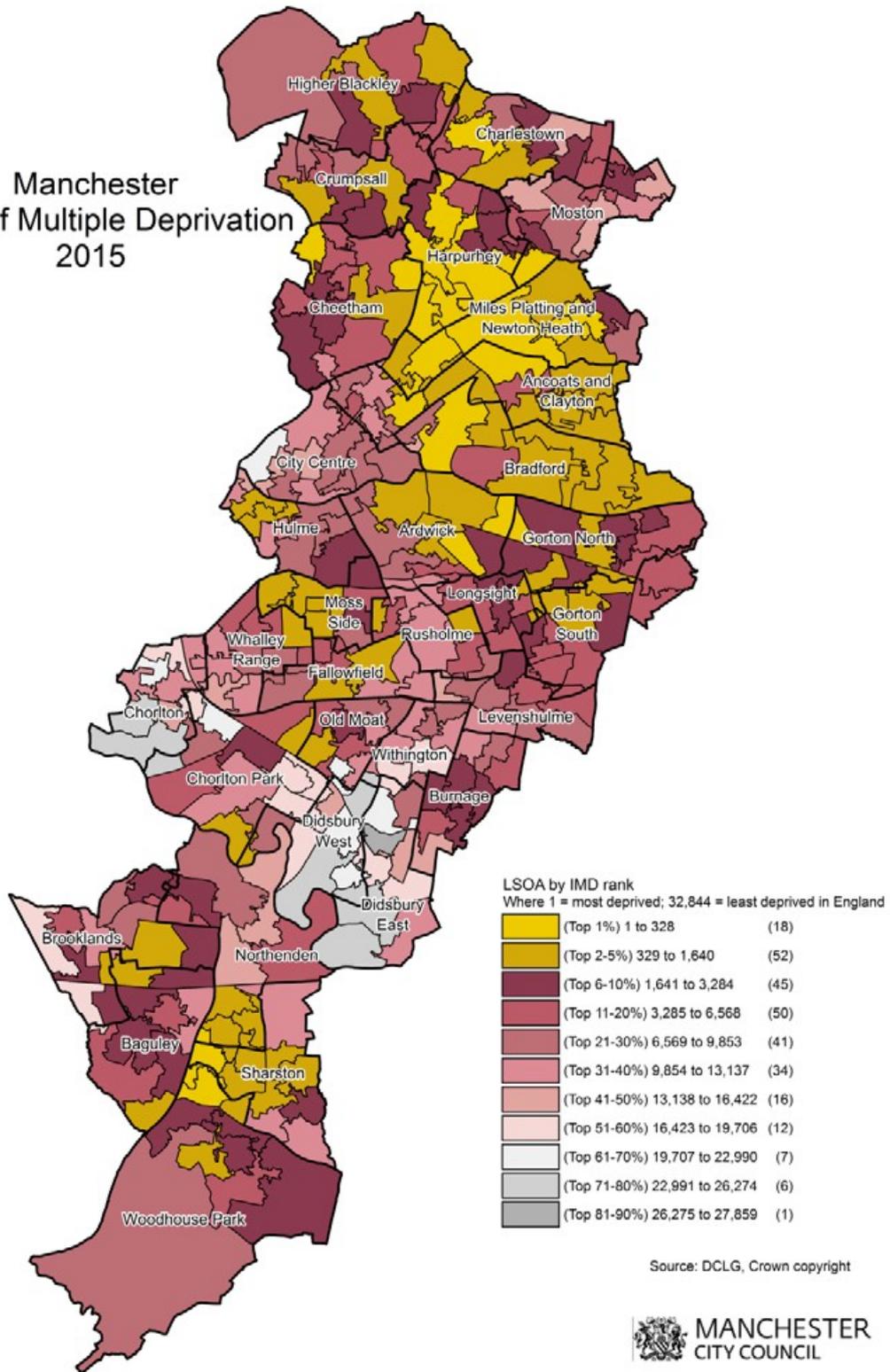
Greater Manchester Town and City Centre Hierarchy	
A	City Centre (within Manchester and Salford)
B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Altrincham (Trafford) 2) Ashton-under-Lyne (Tameside) 3) Bolton (Bolton) 4) Bury (Bury) 5) Oldham (Oldham) 6) Rochdale (Rochdale) 7) Stockport (Stockport) 8) Wigan (Wigan)
C	20 smaller centres
D	50 significant local and suburban centres

Manchester is the most populated municipality (511,000) within both the GMCA area Statutory City Region. Central Manchester, in particular, has undergone a fundamental transformation since the 1980s. Although the legacies of deindustrialisation remain, Manchester is the second most vital urban centre outside of London, acting as a regional core for England's North West, with 392,000 jobs located within the municipality boundary, and 140,000 of those in the city centre alone. In addition, to the south of the city, 19,000 people work at the Manchester Airport, the 20th busiest European airport, with plans to focus major new investment in the development of business activity around this site.

Change has been driven by new business and employment concentrated in the city centre and the Oxford Road Corridor (which connects the city's two main universities and major health facilities); expansion of the retail sector, growth in international tourism, and a repopulation of the city centre and its environs through new high density housing development. Key growth sectors include culture, creative and digital; wholesale and retail; construction; and business, financial and professional services. Since 2015, the number of active enterprises in the city has increased 40%. The city centre and the edges around it have also experienced unprecedented levels of population growth, rising from less than 1000 residents in the mid-1980s to a predicted 100,000 by 2025.

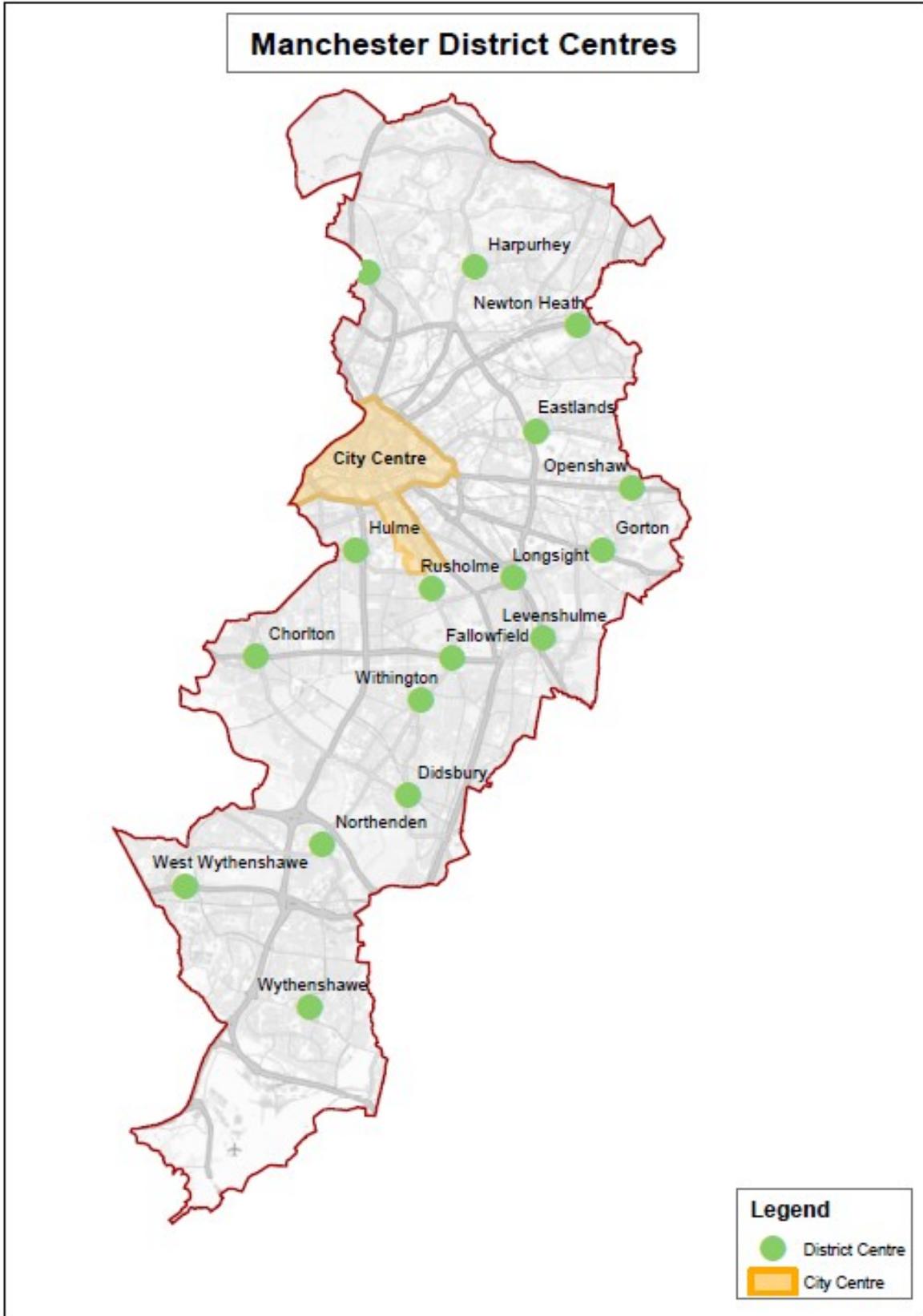
Manchester, however, is also a deeply divided city. Overall, the city is the fifth most-deprived local authority in England, with pockets of neighbourhood deprivation ranked within the top 10% (see Map 2 below). Outside the city centre, Manchester encompasses 17 distinct District Centres (see Map 3 below), with widely varying characteristics in terms of deprivation and demographic profile. Consequently, economic development within Manchester is unbalanced. This context sets the tone for Manchester's involvement in the ABCE Project, where the focus is on the revitalisation of District Centres to counter imbalances in the spatial pattern of economic development.

Manchester
Index of Multiple Deprivation
2015



Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Manchester City Council 100019568 (2015). Analysis by Public Intelligence, PRI

Map 2: Multiple Deprivation in Manchester



Map 3: District Centres in Manchester

SECTION 5: MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

This section summarises the main stakeholders involved in the ABCE project in Manchester and describes the collectives under investigation.

CONNECTING STAKEHOLDERS

To provide oversight of project activity and lend expertise and insight to inform project direction, a stakeholder group has been established. The group comprises representatives from key organisations in the Greater Manchester area with a vested interest in making better places and possessing the requisite knowledge and influence to enact change (see Table 3 below).

Table 3

Name	Organisation
Richard Elliott	Manchester City Council, policy
Karen Findley	Manchester City Council, policy
Anne Morgan	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Councillor Mandie Shilton-Godwin	Manchester City Council, elected member
Vaughan Allen	CityCo/Heart of Manchester Business Improvement District
Elizabeth Faulkner	Altrincham Unlimited Business Improvement District
Paul Ambrose	Rochdale Business Improvement District
Helen Power	CLES – national organisation for local economies
Stephanie Dick	Manchester City Council, policy
Richard Jones	Manchester City Council, Neighbourhood Manager - Harpurhey
Martin Saker	Manchester City Council – Neighbourhood Manager – Withington
Dave Payne	Withington Village Regeneration Partnership

The group meets 3-4 times per year to discuss project progress. The input of this group has been invaluable in collating different perspectives of core issues around area based collaborative entrepreneurship. The insights gleaned from these meetings have allowed the project to progress in a manner most conducive to affecting policy change in district centres across Manchester.

COLLECTIVES UNDER INVESTIGATION

Withington and Gorton provide the two primary case study locations for the project. Each of these district centres possess a range of stakeholders with a vested interest in the centre. However, as the case studies illustrate, there is a disparity in terms of capacity between each, both in terms of number of engaged stakeholders, and their collective capability to enact change in their respective centre (see Table 4 below).

Table 4

Withington key active stakeholders	Gorton key active stakeholders
Local councillors	Local councillors
Neighbourhood manager	Neighbourhood manager
Southway Housing (housing association)	Civic group (events)
The Christie Hospital (leading Cancer care facility)	
Withington Baths (baths/gymnasium/co-working space)	
Withington Civic Society	
Local traders/service representatives	
Local residents	
Property owners	

Evidently, the level of engagement in Withington, and the degree to which the capacity is organised and co-ordinated, far exceeds that which is evident in Gorton. The challenge in each centre therefore is different. In Withington the emphasis is on improving co-ordination and extending the reach of local capacity, or the collectives, whereas in Gorton there extensive capacity building is necessary in order to create a collective capable of enacting change. Further detail on the stakeholders engaged in the case study centre of Withington and Gorton, and how they are organised, is provided in the adjoining case studies.

SECTION 6: POLICY CONTEXT FOR ABCE

This section outlines recent and current policy developments at national, regional and local scale, which relate to area-based collaborative enterprise.

NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

In 2006, there were over 3000 different local, private and public sector and EU-funded business support initiatives in the UK, which prompted the Labour Government to introduce Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP) and reduce the number of schemes. Following its election 2010, the Coalition Government effectively dismantled the existing support for area-based economic development. By 2012, the number of initiatives had dropped to 900. Most notable casualties of this restructuring were the Regional Development Authorities, with much of their responsibilities passing to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) (see below). In addition, the new government introduced a Regional Growth Fund and re-activated Enterprise Zones. These initiatives focus on providing finance, advice and networking, with an emphasis on regional infrastructure development, whereas place-based development such as town or district centres, is not included. Indeed, targeted support for town centre initiatives where there is a clear emphasis on the development of area-based local capacity and networking has remain limited, with the exception of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), which have endured and are now found in over 300 places. Most significantly, however, is legislation announced October 2018, which includes new measures to support high streets and town centres. This section, therefore, provides a synopsis of these measures and assesses their relevance to area-based collaborative enterprise¹².

¹² Please note these measures apply within England only, whereas Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have their own legislative frameworks.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (BIDS)

BIDS are business led partnerships established in a defined area, which are created through a ballot process to deliver additional services to local businesses, and allow the business community and municipalities authorities to work together to improve the local trading environment e.g. through extra safety/security, cleansing and environmental measures. BIDs have largely replaced Town Centre Managements as the main place management delivery-mechanism. The legislative framework for BIDs is set out in:

- Part 4 of Local Government Act 2003
- Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004
- Business Rate Supplements Act 2009
- Cross Boundary Business Improvement Districts 2013, enabling BIDs to operate across local authority boundaries.

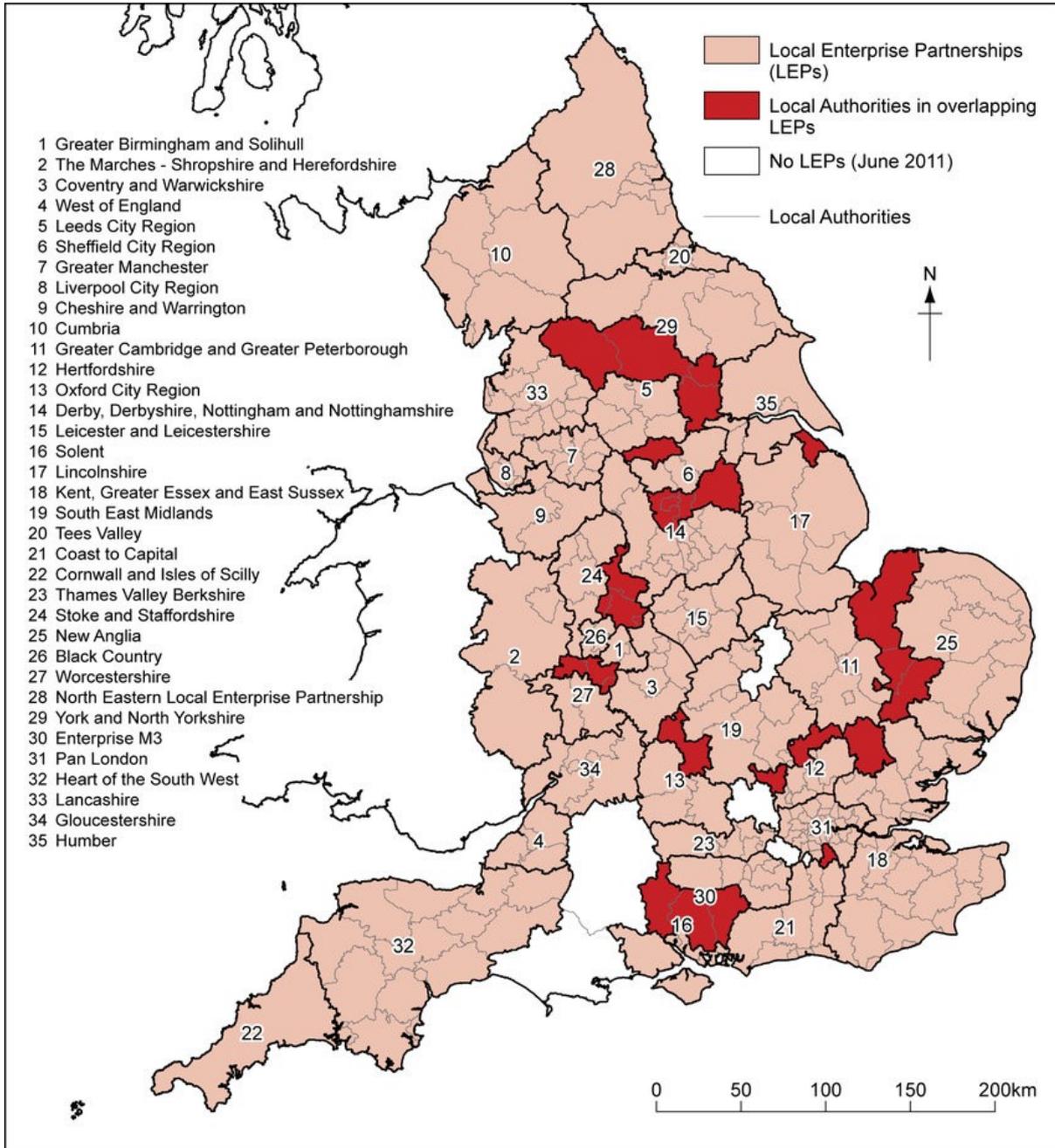
This applies to England only, with alternative legislation in place for Northern Ireland and Scotland. At the end of 2018, there were 303 BIDs in operation across the UK. Most are Property-Occupier BIDs (98.7%). There are just three Property-Owner BIDs, two Property-Owner and Occupier BIDs, and zero Cross-Borough BIDs. Property-Occupier BIDs identify themselves by type, based on the dominant land-use and occupier types within their geographical area. In terms of location, 79% are in England and 20% in London alone. BIDS remain a relatively new mechanism. Despite the growth in the number, almost two-thirds of English town and city centres do not have a BID.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS (LEPS)

Announced in 2010, LEPS are private sector led partnerships between businesses and local public sector bodies, designed to encourage collaboration and strategic decision making at a sub-regional functional economic area, replacing Regional Development Authorities. There are 38 LEPS across England (see Map 4 below). LEPs provide a platform for businesses, local elected leaders, universities, skills providers and voluntary and community sector organisations to shape policies for their area, bringing in business expertise, as well as forming new partnerships between the public and private sector across existing administrative geographies. In 2013, LEPs acquired new powers to stimulate growth, under a regional Growth Deals schemes worth over £9 billion. LEPs also provide oversight for EU Structural and Investment Funds. In 2017, LEPs were tasked with producing delivery plans for Local Industrial Strategies (LIS), which include how they are investing existing Local Growth Fund awards, and delivering other local growth programmes such as Enterprise Zones and Growth Hubs, and City Deals in the seven combined authorities, which have an elected Mayor.

Table 5

Development of LEPS	
Nov 2017	Wave 1. The first eight trailblazer LIS announced: Greater Manchester, West Midlands (Greater Birmingham & Solihull, Coventry & Warwickshire and Black Country) and the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor (Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley and South East Midlands).
Jul 2018	Wave 2, Six LIS announced: Cheshire & Warrington, Heart of the South West, Leicester & Leicestershire, North East, Tees Valley and West of England.
Dec 2018	Wave 3 – UK government announces the entire country will benefit from LIS, with the rest of the LEPS forming the final third wave.



Map 4: Local Enterprise Partnerships in England

TOWN'S FUND AND NATIONAL HIGH STREETS TASKFORCE

In autumn budget 2018, the UK government announced a raft of new measures to support high streets and town centres, with detail set out in *Our Plan for the High Street*¹³ (summarised in Table 6 below):

Table 6

UK Government measures to support high streets and town centres		Impact on Greater Manchester
£1 billion	Future High Streets Fund, supporting 101 towns	7 successful bids (Farnworth, Bolton, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Streford, Wigan)
£92 million	Historic England Heritage Action Zones - supporting 59 towns	4 successful bids (Rochdale, Stalybridge, Tyldesley, Wigan)
£1 billion	Towns Fund supporting 100 towns	4 Town Deals (Bolton, Rochdale, Oldham, Cheadle)
£9m	High Streets Task Force, to support all 318 English local authority areas	2 pilot towns (Swinton, Withington)
£1.6 billion	To be allocated	

Broadly, these initiatives are designed to provide upfront support to help local areas make their high streets and town centres fit for the future, and to enhance local skills and knowledge by developing local leadership and providing expert advice. The initiatives announced in 2018 are designed to support wider economic growth within local areas, aligned with Industrial Strategy. They apply only to England, with separate measures in place or under-development in other parts of the UK. Although Greater Manchester has benefitted from these initiatives, The City of Manchester is only receiving indirect support through the High Streets Task Force for Withington.

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-for-the-high-street-budget-2018-brief>

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The principle document in terms of regional policy is the emerging Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF). Following devolution and the establishment of a City-Deal, the plan is produced by the GMCA, comprising input from the ten municipalities of the region, plus the Mayor of Greater Manchester. The details outlined below are from the current draft framework, which remains subject to amendments, further consultation and examination.

DRAFT GREATER MANCHESTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK (GMSF) 2019

The GMSF is a long-term strategy, which sets out how the Greater Manchester region should develop up until 2037. The GMSF:

- identifies the amount of new development that will come forward across the 10 districts, in terms of housing, offices, and industry and warehousing, and the main areas in which this will be focused;
- supports the delivery of key infrastructure, such as transport and utilities;
- protects the important environmental assets across the city region;
- allocates sites for employment and housing outside of the existing urban area; and
- defines a new green belt boundary for Greater Manchester

Other GMCA initiatives include the Town Centre Challenge, Mayoral Development Corporations, and Town of Culture. This report, therefore, discusses only those policies most relevant to area-based collaboration and district centre development.

Table 7

Other relevant regional policies	
POLICY GM-STRAT 12 MAIN TOWN CENTRES	<p>Policy GM-Strat 12 acknowledges the role of the main town centres within the city-region as local economic drivers and promotes their continued development as the primary focus for office, retail, leisure and cultural activity for their surrounding areas.</p> <p>The policy also promotes residential densification of the main town centres, through managed expansion of housing both within centres and along key public transport corridors, with the development of centres as major public transport hubs. Finally, the policy calls for careful management of development to retain and enhance the local distinctiveness of each main town centre.</p>
Policy GM-E3 Retail and Leisure	<p>GM-3 covers new retail and leisure uses in town centres and advocates the maintenance and development of the existing hierarchy of centres. Local plans define the detail and boundaries of centres at lower levels of the hierarchy (see Local Policy Context below)</p>
POLICY GM-C8 STREETS FOR ALL	<p>GM-C8 establishes some principles regarding street design, public realm and place quality, focusing on walkability, cycling and public transport.</p>
Town Centre Challenge	<p>Invites all councils across Greater Manchester to nominate a town to be part of the initiative. The Mayor, working with each council, will bring together housing providers, public and private landowners, developers, community groups and other key stakeholders in a concerted effort to support local councils to unlock the potential in town centres, particularly to deliver viable housing markets and sustainable communities.</p>
Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC)	<p>A MDC is a statutory body created to bring forward the regeneration of a defined area. They have powers to acquire, develop, hold, and dispose of land and property. They also have powers to facilitate the provision of infrastructure.</p>
Town of Culture	<p>An annual competition, where the winning town receives a small grant to develop and programme events and activities that celebrate the identity of that place.</p>

LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Adopted in 2011, Manchester's Core Strategy 2012-27 is the key document in the Manchester Local Plan. It sets out the long term strategic policies for Manchester's future development and forms the framework for the assessment of planning applications. Table 8 below summarise sections most relevant to District Centres. Table 9 summarises guidance for specific areas, and

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Table 10 summarises other relevant policies not part of the Core Strategy.

Table 8

Manchester Core Strategy: policies concerning district centres	
Policy C 8 Local Centres	Establishes the principle that local shopping and service provision in local centres should be retained where it remains viable, as they provide important services to the local community. The guidance outlined below connects to this broader objective.
Policy C10 Leisure and Evening Economy	Outlines guidance on the balance of uses within centres so that evening/night-time uses are complementary to neighbouring uses.
POLICY C10.58	The City's ambition is to achieve a better balance of evening and night-time activities and a better distribution throughout the City. The policy suggests that in some areas, concentrations of uses associated with the evening economy have led to problems with anti-social behaviour, while other parts of the City suffer from lack of activity during the evening. Ultimately, the policy asserts the importance that uses within centres are balanced so that evening/night-time uses are complementary to neighbouring uses.
Policy 10.59	Outlines planning application guidance regarding change of use from A1 retail. Whereas the policy supports non-retail development, there are caveats e.g. where specific units occupying a prime or prominent location, or with substantial floorspace or frontage, the policy advises change of use maybe inappropriate. The policy also outlines guidance on the development of the leisure and evening economy, supporting development, which contributes to the vitality of district centres and supports a balanced and socially inclusive economy. Again, the policy outlines restrictions to prevent over-concentration bars and takeaways; uses which may conflict with residential amenity; or where change of use may undermine existing retail functionality.
Housing policies H 3 to H7	Promotes the development of high-density housing within or adjacent to regeneration sites within the Regional Centre, and within all District Centres as part of mixed-use schemes

Table 9

Manchester Core Strategy: specific area based policies	
North Manchester Policy C 3	Outlines guidance for the development of North Manchester District Centres (Cheetham Hill and Harpurhey). Within Cheetham Hill, uses other than retail are promoted to improve daytime vitality including broader range of commercial and public uses. For Harpurhey, the policy proposes an increase in

	retail alongside additional uses, including food and drink, employment and community facilities. Some housing is proposed in both centres.
East Manchester Policy C 4 and C5	Outlines proposals for East Manchester District Centres (Eastlands, Gorton, Newton Heath and Openshaw). The district centres of Newton Heath, Eastlands, Gorton and Openshaw offer opportunities for small scale mixed use local employment opportunities. Larger scale proposals will be considered if good transport links exist to the City Centre/Regional Centre. A broader range of commercial and public uses promoted for all centres. A key anchor store is identified as a requirement in Newton Heath, and a more diverse range of uses and schemes improving access and movement supported for Gorton and Openshaw.
Central Manchester Policy C 5	Outlines specific guidance for the Central Manchester District Centres, which include Hulme, Longsight and Rusholme. The policy suggests the need for additional retail provision, focused on Hulme and Longsight. The improvement to the quality of the environment in Rusholme and Longsight is seen as a priority to help retain and attract shoppers and visitors.
South Manchester Policy C 6	Outlines specific guidance for the South Manchester District Centres, which include Chorlton, Didsbury, Fallowfield, Levenshulme and Withington. In general, the policy increased retail, along with improvements to other commercial and community services, to extend the diversity of the local offer. The policy, however, makes special reference to the need to support independent retail in Chorlton, Didsbury and Levenshulme.
Wythenshawe Policy C 7	Outlines guidance for a specific area of the city, the Wythenshawe District Centres, which include Baguley (West Wythenshawe), Northenden and Wythenshawe Town Centre. In this case, the City identifies Wythenshawe Town Centre as a location for more strategic development, with a need to extend retail provision across the neighbourhood, together with potential hotel, commercial and other non-retail uses, and new residential development. This perhaps reflects the changing demographics of Wythenshawe and that retail has been under-provided through existing development. Over recent years, the area has benefitted from a new tram link to the city-centre and airport, increasing the attractiveness of Wythenshawe as a residential location. Northenden, located to the north of Wythenshawe, is a distinct neighbourhood, where additional food retail is identified as a need.

Table 10

Other relevant policies	
Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document 2017	
Policy 1: Vitality and Viability	<p>This policy refers specifically to the regulation and limitation of hot food takeaways (A5 use class in British planning system) in district and local centres. The policy outlines where the cumulative impact of introducing the facility would be detrimental to the vitality and viability of a centre and would affect the balance between the daytime and night time economy and the health of the population. The number of takeaways in centres has since fallen from 186 in 2017 to 179 in 2019. The exception is Rusholme, which is exempt from the policy.</p>
Saved Urban Development Plan (UPD) Policies 2012¹⁴	
UDP Policy S1.2	<p>Outlines how Manchester City Council, in partnership with the private sector, aims to encourage the improvement and re-development of existing District Centres in order to ensure that they remain the focus for both shopping and a full range of community facilities. These include Cheetham Hill, Chorlton, Didsbury, the district centre in Sportcity, Fallowfield, Gorton, Harpurhey, Levenshulme, Longsight, Newton Heath, Northenden, Openshaw, Rusholme, Withington and Wythenshawe.</p> <p>The policy also places particular emphasis on improving safety and enhancing environmental quality, tackling traffic problems and increasing economic viability, prioritising the following centres:- Cheetham Hill, the district centre in Sportcity, Gorton, Harpurhey, Levenshulme, Longsight, Newton Heath, Openshaw, Wythenshawe. Elsewhere, the policy proposes limited measures to improve conditions for pedestrians especially those with restricted mobility, visual impairments or shopping with young children. New development is welcomed where it replaces obsolete shopping floorspace and is in keeping with the character of the existing centre.</p>

¹⁴ Selected UDP policies (dating from 1995) were saved in 2012 when the Core Strategy was adopted and are therefore still current policy.

EVALUATION OF POLICY SUPPORT FOR AREAS BASED COLLABORATION AT DISTRICT CENTRE LEVEL

This evaluation focuses on reviewing existing guidance on place management, structures, delivery and legacy to ABCE.

Table 11 summarises issues arising national policy,

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Table 12 focuses on regional policy, and Table 13 local policy.

Table 11

National policy	Summary of main issues	Policy implications
<p>BIDs</p>	<p>There are just four BIDs in operation across Greater Manchester (Altrincham, Manchester, Rochdale, and Stockport).</p> <p>In Manchester, the BID is located in the retail core of the city-centre.</p> <p>It appears BIDs only form in larger centres with a critical mass of potential levy payers, and not at district or local level.</p>	<p>There may be potential to develop BIDs outside the city centre in larger district centres.</p> <p>If the BID model is not seen as sustainable at District Centre level, then what sort of mechanisms would be appropriate at the neighbourhood scale to engage local businesses in collaborative place management activities.</p>
<p>LEPs</p>	<p>The effectiveness of LEPs in terms of their delivery and impact remains to be seen, although there is a concern that current structures do not well-serve business development in town centres and high streets.</p>	<p>Need for alignment between Local Industrial Strategies with local policies to support place-based business development and clusters.</p>
<p>Future High Streets Fund/Taskforce</p>	<p>Mismatch or lag between national policy guidance, which prescribes ways of working locally and the local and regional guidance.</p> <p>Manchester selected Withington for a FHSF bid, but was unsuccessful. However, Withington selected as one of 14 pilot towns to receive additional guidance and support through the new High Streets Task Force.</p>	<p>Strengthening of local leadership capacity, knowledge and skills may sustain existing collaborative networks.</p> <p>Important to isolate good practice and disseminate across other District Centres in Manchester.</p>

Table 12

Regional policy	Summary of main issues	Policy implications
Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework	<p>Focuses on main town centres within the city-region. Stresses centres will need to adapt and respond to changing circumstances if they are to continue to flourish and successfully meet the needs of surrounding communities. The policy advocates appropriate large-scale retail and leisure development within the centres in the upper levels of the hierarchy and calls for new housing in main town centres.</p> <p>Reference to District Centres is extremely limited.</p>	<p>In principle, the overall objectives are valid; however, there is no guidance, other than development control, regarding the ongoing management of places, and no mention of support for area-based collaboration.</p> <p>Greater focus is required on the delivery mechanisms required to transform the strategic vision for the region in practice.</p>
Town Centre Challenge	<p>The scheme encompasses 8 centres¹⁵ across the GM region and is focussed on developing solutions for housing provision in town centres.</p> <p>Includes a range of centres, including District Centres, but the support is unclear.</p>	<p>Need to align this initiative with the development of local place management structures.</p> <p>Ideally, this activity would align with the IPM's 25 factors and 4Rs framework</p>
Mayoral Development Corporation	<p>Regeneration and planning focussed, rather than place management.</p> <p>Only one major centre (Stockport) is so far establishing an MDC.</p>	<p>The impact of this scheme remains to be seen, but there is potential to extend to district centres, where physical restructuring is a priority.</p>
Town of Culture	<p>Supports place activation, but only in one town centre per year.</p> <p>The first grant awarded in December 2019, so too early to gauge impact.</p>	<p>The scale of this initiative is unlikely to drive significant transformation, although, but could benefit district centres.</p>

¹⁵ Farnworth, Prestwich, Royton, Rochdale, Swinton, Stalybridge, Stretford, and Leigh.

Table 13

Local policy	Summary of main issues	Policy implications
<p>Manchester Core Strategy and UDP</p>	<p>Centres are considered assets, but existing policy too regulatory and process driven.</p> <p>Existing guidance focuses on regulating the balance of activities within district centres, with a particular emphasis on the management of retail functions and the promotion of high-density housing as part of mixed-use schemes.</p> <p>Supports development that might contribute to the vitality of district centres, and outlines controls on activities, which might undermine residential amenity, or where activities subject to cumulative impact may be detrimental to character or viability and vitality of the neighbourhood.</p> <p>Commercial development within local centres receives limited support. Given recent restructuring of the UK retail sector and new trading conditions, the focus on retail expansion, as a mechanism for restoring vitality and viability in district centres is a concern.</p> <p>The Core Strategy mentions support of the independent retail sector only in the South Manchester Policy.</p>	<p>Other than partnerships with the private sector, Manchester's existing policy guidance remains firmly couched within planning discourse, and unclear regarding the delivery mechanisms required to provide the ongoing management of district centres.</p> <p>There is a need to consider how place management structures can be embedded in policy areas outside planning e.g. neighbourhood service teams.</p> <p>Potential for alignment of planning policy with other areas of place-intervention e.g. markets management, cultural policy, housing, transport, and tourism.</p>

SECTION 7: OUTCOMES, POLICY INSTRUMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- Multiple forms of local collaboration
- Community capacity to work collaboratively patchy
- Manchester neighbourhoods have a poor collective offer
- Alignment between district centre offer and local catchment is variable
- Value of small scale interventions e.g. events, markets, public realm improvements

Bottlenecks

- Getting buy-in from the right stakeholders
- Local government letting go control / Silo-nature of local government
- Local enablers/blockers
- Succession management and sustainability
- Spectre of gentrification
- Conflating planning/ regeneration and local enterprise

OPPORTUNITY AND ACTIONS

- Alignment with zero-carbon agenda e.g. shop local
- Balance growth and resilience
- Smaller centres collectively offer great potential to drive city-wide change e.g. rebalancing growth
- Supporting local place leaders
- Signposting to national, regional, and local support available to local collectives
- Place2Place networking
- Alignment of city-wide policy – e.g. cultural strategy, Manchester International Festival, tourism

The collaboration between the IPM and Manchester City Council has led to a discussion about the role of future policy in helping to support existing district centres and, where appropriate, identify potential new district centres. A key area of work is the review of the Council's Local Plan, which has just commenced a consultation on issues. The review will consider the character and individual needs of each centre, taking into account recommendations from the pilot reports. Policy will be developed to support development that creates multifunctional thriving and attractive centres.

Recommendations for planning policy to support collaborative working in centres and consideration of amendments to district centre boundaries will also be considered as part of this work. As part of the Local Plan review analysis will continue to build a better understanding of each district centre and establish whether there is a need for new district centres or amendments to current boundaries.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The work described in the Vital and viable neighbourhoods section above has led to Manchester City Council bringing forward a number of key recommendations. These are informing actions to be considered by the Council in terms of existing approaches within district centres, and where the Council can work with the traders and other partner organisations to facilitate changes in the district centres:

1. Strengthen local networks and their capacity to effect change:
 - Build community ownership or collective responsibility for each centre.
 - Support effective networks of local stakeholders where they exist, to raise their capacity to take further responsibility for centre management and marketing.
 - Where networks are less established, but are beginning to emerge, the municipality should capitalise on already engaged stakeholders to encourage momentum and build capacity.
 - Where networks do not yet exist the municipality may need to take leadership responsibility, on the understanding that once new community led structures are in place, the authority will need to step back and take on a more nurturing position.
 - New and established networks should form subgroups to take responsibility for specific interventions (e.g. social media) and environmental improvements.
 - The municipality should investigate options to identify capacity to initiate greater stakeholder collaboration and facilitate regular meetings.

2. Align place making interventions against the IPM 25 factors

- District centre networks are recommended to refer to the IPM 25 Priority Interventions and the 4Rs Framework (Repositioning, Reinventing, Rebranding and Restructuring) as a mechanism for identifying priority interventions. It is important that priorities are set locally and not set from above and that networks focus on factors they can influence at a local level.
- Each centre has individual issues, but a top priority across all centres is the visual appearance including litter, graffiti and quality of storefronts and public realm.
- Place branding is created collectively and managed by local stakeholders utilising low cost social media
- Improving the resilience of centres is essential which will require many centres to reduce dependency on retail and to consider new uses to create multi-functional centres.
- Introduce more market activity or further capitalise on existing market assets, as markets are particularly important drivers of diversity and vibrancy.
- Co-locate key services in central hubs in centres. Public services located together in centres have a significant impact on footfall.

3. Monitor and share data to make informed decisions

- The monitoring and analysis of footfall data has proved crucial in the pilot centres in allowing stakeholders to monitor the routine footfall patterns in each centre, and the impact of interventions to be measured.
- In addition to providing evidence on which to base decision making, the data has also provided a tangible and accessible source of information around which stakeholder groups have coalesced and utilised as a marketing/promotional tool.
- Footfall provides the only source of round-the-clock insight into how these centres are being used. Therefore, data should continue to be captured and shared with local networks on a regular basis.

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AREA BASED COLLABORATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN CITIES

The above recommendations, therefore, will inform ongoing work under the auspices of the Area Based Collaborative Entrepreneurship in Cities (ABCitiEs) European partnership, where the IPM and MCC are continuing to work in partnership. This will involve the:

1. Completion of a further six pilot projects in centres with footfall counters across the city. These are Withington (work complete), Fallowfield, Rusholme, Levenshulme and Cheetham Hill District Centres and Victoria Avenue Local Centre. Once completed an action plan to trial emerging recommendations will be produced and monitored for two years.
2. Provision of a workshop for council staff working in the pilot centres. They will review the impact of the project and consider action plans for nurturing effective local networks and will receive training on analysing footfall data.
3. Delivery of the ABCitiEs conference in Manchester in 2021 for all partners, stakeholders and interested parties to share the findings of the partnership research and pilot projects to date.