



ABCitiEs
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Area-Based Collaborative Entrepreneurship in Cities

Action Plan City of Manchester

July 2020



**Interreg
Europe**

European Union | European Regional Development Fund



**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**



**MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL**

Letter of Support from Councillor Suzanne Richards, Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration

In 2016, Manchester City Council established a District Centre Subgroup to consider the changing role of its district centres and the most effective policy approach the council and its partners can take to promote successful and vibrant centres into the future. A core aspect of the work was to install footfall counters in 10 of Manchester's district centres and to work with the Institute of Place Management (IPM) to run Vital and Viable centre pilots.

The aim of the IPM Management pilot 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; and
- monitor centre performance.

As it became clear that the role of collaborative partnerships in the success of centres was key, Manchester was very pleased to join forces with partners across Europe to form the Interreg project, Area Based Collaborative Entrepreneurship in Europe (ABCitiEs). We have drawn on the experience of our partner cities to develop our understanding of collaborative working and to develop the action plan. In particular, we have been very interested to learn how Amsterdam has created Business Investment Zones at a neighbourhood level. Officers have also found visits to case studies in all our partner cities fascinating and now have a better understanding of the importance of building local-scale bonds between entrepreneurs who share a strong commitment to place and the local population.

Over the next two years, at a citywide level, we will be taking forward our review of the Council's Local Plan. The review will consider the character and individual needs of each centre, taking into account recommendations from the pilot reports and the ABCitiEs findings to develop policy that will support development that creates multifunctional thriving and attractive centres. Innovative recommendations for planning policy to support collaborative working in centres will be tested through consultation as part of this work and through the regional planning policy document the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. On a local level, we will be assessing the added value of active collaboratives by working closely with local partnerships to finalise and implement the Withington Village Local Plan.

We look forward to hosting the ABCitiEs conference in 2021 and sharing the findings of the partnership with a wider audience.

July 2020

Contents

Letter of Support from Councillor Suzanne Richards, Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration.....	1
General Information	3
Introduction	4
Lessons learnt from local collaboration	5
Lessons learnt from inter-regional collaboration	6
Outline of proposed actions	8
Action 1: To assess the views of the public, the government and other stakeholders to policy supporting collaborative working in local and sub-regional planning policy documents	8
Action 2: Monitor effectiveness and continued involvement of collectives in the Withington Village Development Plan	8
Action 1 To assess the views of the public, the government and other stakeholders to policy supporting collaborative working in local and sub-regional planning policy documents	9
Policy context.....	9
Background	9
Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.....	9
Manchester Local Plan.....	10
Details of the Action Envisaged	10
Timeframe	11
Players involved	11
Costs and Funding Sources	11
Action 2 Monitor effectiveness and continued involvement of collectives in the Withington Village Development Plan	12
Policy context.....	12
Background	12
Non-statutory Policy: Place Management .	12
Withington Regeneration Plan	12
Details of the Action Envisaged	13

Players involved	14
Timeframe	14
Costs and Funding Sources	15

General Information

Project:

Area Based Collaborative Entrepreneurship in
Cities (ABCitiEs)

Partner organisations:

Institute of Place Management (Manchester
Metropolitan University)

Manchester City Council

Other departments involved:

Directorate for Growth and Development,
Manchester City Council

Country:

United Kingdom

Nuts 1: UKD North West England

Nuts 2: UKD3 Greater Manchester

Nuts 3: UKD33 Manchester

Contact persons:

Karen Findley (Manchester City Council)

Steve Millington (Manchester Metropolitan
University)

Email:

k.findley@manchester.gov.uk

s.millington@mmu.ac.uk

Phone number:

+44 (0)7931 261999 (Karen Findley)

+44 (0)1612476201 (Steve Millington)

Introduction

In the case of Manchester, the research for the ABCitiEs project focuses on the potential of place-based collaborative networks of local enterprises to contribute to the improvement of trading conditions at a neighbourhood-level, specifically within what are termed District Centres in a UK planning context. These centres face a number of structural challenges, initially from Out-of-Town retailing and latterly from online shopping. With declining public and private investment in public realm and general appearance, many centres are also becoming unappealing places to visit, dwell and linger. Consequently, many centres are in perceived decline with rising store closures and higher vacancy rates, and declining footfall. As centres become less busy, other co-located activities, notably leisure, hospitality and public services are also beginning to suffer, bringing into question the sustainability of District Centres as focal points for local communities.

With restrictions on local government funding, capacity to effect change in District Centres is increasingly reliant on the creation of additional capacity beyond local government through the establishment of place-based networks involving local business collectives and other place-based stakeholders. Although cross-sector collaborative place management networks can be effective mechanisms in restoring vitality and viability to local centres, the formation of appropriate and effective local collectives remains highly variable across the UK. Consequently, there is much concern at a national and local level regarding the future of local centres, worries amplified with the impact of COVID19.

The Manchester State of Play Report, produced during Stage 1 of the ABCitiEs project, outlines how there are multiple policies designed to protect and nurture local centres, but there is a lack of clarity regarding appropriate policy instruments through which to deliver this objective. As a consequence, the report, establishes three research questions:

- What new policy actions can the local municipality take to strengthen local networks and their capacity to effect change?
- How might the municipality develop new tools and evidence for monitoring the impact of collective action, and benchmark the quality of their work?
- How might learning from ABCitiEs project be transferable from a local into a regional policy context?

During Stage 1, detailed evidence was analysed from four district centres in Manchester (Chorlton, Gorton, Harpurhey, Northenden) and new research conducted in one further centre (Withington), complimented by a longitudinal analysis of hourly footfall data across 10 district centres. This evaluation reveals collective working at the neighbourhood scale is apparent within the city, but the strength and effectiveness of local networks varies greatly within each centre. Subsequently, two case studies were produced to draw attention to this disparity. The first outlines the situation in Withington, a district centre located in South Manchester and reveals a highly functioning local network, the Withington Village Partnership, which is engaged in improving local trading conditions. This network involves key local stakeholders from the public, private and community sectors, working collaboratively towards mutually agreed strategic and operational objectives. In contrast, the second case study focuses on Gorton, located in East Manchester, an underperforming centre, where efforts to improve the centre are disjointed and hampered through a lack of coordination between key local stakeholders.

Consequently, this evidence establishes the need for the municipality 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. Ultimately then, the Manchester element of the ABCitiEs project aligns with INTERREG's focus on promoting SME competitiveness through generating synergies, which can arise through enhanced clustering, local networks, and the

creation of social capital within the business community.

This Action Plan, therefore, draws on knowledge and understanding developed throughout Stage 1, including lessons learnt from both local research and from inter-regional co-operation with the other partners involved in the ABCitiEs project. The plan outlines the actions Manchester will take during the second phase of the ABCitiEs project to develop existing and new policy instruments to support local collectives within district centres across the city-region over the next two years.

Lesson learnt from ABCitiEs project and interregional meetings

Lessons learnt from local collaboration

A key added value from Manchester's involvement in ABCities relates to how the project created an opportunity to extend collaboration between the Institute of Place Management (at Manchester Metropolitan University), and Manchester City Council. An important part of this process was the establishment of a steering group bringing together senior figures from the city's Policy Directorate, representatives from local collectives, social enterprise, and Business Improvement Districts in operation in Greater Manchester. This group has met several times during Stage 1 to discuss the role of future policy in helping to support district centres, bringing experience and oversight from several perspectives including municipal policy, local partnerships, and practitioners in the field of place management, including Business Improvement Districts. Discussions held within this forum has introduced the idea of place management as a potential solution to the

challenges in managing Manchester's district centres.

Another important additional value stemming from Manchester's involvement in the ABCitiEs project concerns how the research undertaken in Manchester during Stage 1, provided an opportunity to engage directly with local stakeholders in the Withington district centre. Here, the project team provided a stakeholder engagement workshop attended by 50 local people including independent traders and other key place based stakeholders. The workshop provided an opportunity to also share data analysis at the neighbourhood level. The findings from this were later written up as a report for the municipality and shared with local stakeholders. The impact of this work was almost immediate. Following the IPM's recommendation local traders work together to co-ordinate activity, local independents formed a trade association, the *We Are Withington* group, which quickly enacted recommendations, such as creating an online brand to better promote the neighbourhood. This group has subsequently become involved in organising events, to help promote the local centre, creating direct benefits for local independent traders. Furthermore, *We Are Withington* now has representation on the wider Withington Village Regeneration Partnership. Together they are driving key projects to improve the local trading environment, such as the Withington Walls project to embellish storefronts.



Source: Saker, M (2020)

Importantly, this group now provides additional capacity to the existing local partnership, and is involved in long term strategic planning for the area, it is incumbent to continue to monitor and support their activity throughout Stage 2, as the Withington case perhaps provides a model of good practice for other collectives across the city.

In summary, as part of its 'Our Manchester' approach, participation in the ABCitiEs project and its work on the vitality and viability of its district centres, the Council now recognises the significant benefits of the Council, businesses, local groups and local residents working together to improve their area. Subsequently, this triggered a policy review within the municipality to consider how it could better support local collectives and consider the character and individual needs of each district centre across the city.

Lessons learnt from inter-regional collaboration

The policy review also takes into account lessons learnt from inter-regional collaboration supported by the ABCitiEs project during Stage 1 of the project. Whereas in the UK local policy makers have struggled to identify viable alternatives to Business Improvements Districts to take on

greater responsibility for managing smaller centres, Manchester drew inspiration from Amsterdam's example of Business Improvement Zones (BIZs) presented at the inter-regional workshops. It was enlightening to learn how Amsterdam created 65 neighbourhood BIZs across just one city, provoking a discussion between the Manchester partners to consider the application of this model in a UK context.

Also informing Manchester's learning is the example of support for traditional and creative SME's in Vilnius, together with the interventions in Čakovec/Varaždin to reinvigorate unused and vacant space through arts and culture-led initiatives. In addition, with the importance of markets to specific centres in Manchester, it was also informative to learn about measures to support Kipseli Municipal Market in Athens, prompting consideration in Manchester regarding more innovative approaches to market management. Ultimately, this experience led to a subsequent discussion and recommendations to Manchester City Council concerning how the municipality might better align strategic policy areas, such as markets, tourism and cultural strategies, with policies to regenerate district centres.

An important and perhaps overlooked consideration arising from the project is how ABCitiEs created opportunities for local stakeholders from Manchester to attend and present about their neighbourhood at inter-regional workshops in Croatia and Greece. In addition to providing opportunities for them to meet and exchange ideas with other local stakeholders from the partner cities, the experience proved invaluable in terms of the positive feedback and validation of the approach taken by neighbourhood actors in Manchester. This has been a key additional value arising for Manchester involvement in the Interreg project.

The other case studies under investigation in the ABCitiEs project, therefore, have revealed to Manchester, the importance of building on the potential to amplify local-scale bonds between entrepreneurs who share a strong commitment to

place. This might include opportunities for joint marketing or branding of local centres, together with small scale, iterative place making interventions to improve local trading conditions. Although such interventions may be small scale, they can be vital in fostering a change in attitude amongst local businesses, to re-orientate them towards taking a more proactive role in place management, together with building a better understanding of how joint working can be mutually beneficial for both local businesses and places.

A key outcome for Manchester resulting from the inter-regional cooperation, therefore, is recognition by the municipality that it adopts a more nuanced and sophisticated approach to centre management, avoiding a top-down prescriptive model, and instead develop consensual place-specific interventions, worked out with local collectives across the city. Consequently, the development of new policy in Manchester will support development that creates multifunctional thriving and attractive district centres in the city.

Putting the lessons learnt from Stage 1 into practice

In summary, the main benefit for Manchester, therefore, is that if the City had not been involved in the ABCitiEs project, it would not even be thinking about the role of collectives in relation to developing and sustaining area-based improvements to the local trading environment of district centres. Furthermore, the City would not have subsequently initiated a policy review at the end of Stage 1, to embed support for collectives within its main policies. Going forward in Stage 2, therefore, a key area of work will be a review of the Council's Local Plan, which has just commenced a consultation on issues. In March 2020, Manchester City Council's Economic Scrutiny Committee received a report on District Centres from the IPM incorporating the findings

from Stage 1 and agreed it's policy recommendations be endorsed (approved) by the Executive Committee. The recommended policy guidance, therefore, will consider:

- Work should be undertaken to develop targeted and place specific interventions to build local collaboration.
- Work should be undertaken to increase local capacity to effect change in areas of the city where existing capacity is low.
- Efforts should be devoted to enhancing existing local collaborative networks.
- Monitoring data on centre performance should be collected and shared with partners so that evidence based actions to improve centres could be taken.

In addition, with the *We Are Withington* group now informing a long term regeneration plan for their district centre, it will be important to continue to monitor the impact and experience of this trail-blazing collective, as it will provide further guidance to assess the implications of Manchester's local policy review.

Outline of proposed actions

Action 1: To assess the views of the public, the government and other stakeholders to policy supporting collaborative working in local and sub-regional planning policy documents

Policy instrument to be addressed: Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and Manchester's current Local Plan (Core Strategy)

With reference to the policy approval process explained in Section 2.2, Manchester now has reports and evidence developed during Stage 1 of the ABCities Project, which has been presented to the Council's elected members through numerous committee reports and presentations, such as the District Centre Subgroup and Economic Scrutiny Committee. This led to an agreement at the end of Stage 1 regarding the nature of future policy. Subsequent actions during Stage 2, therefore will feed into the development new policy. The focus of the research, therefore, planned for Stage 2 will be on informing how support for local collectives can be embedded within local area plans for each district centre in the city.

With the learning acquired through the ABCities project, Manchester therefore aims to develop new policy guidance and instruments for the revitalisation of local centres within both the city's boundaries and the wider Greater Manchester region. Manchester's Action Plan, therefore, specifically aims to assess the views of the public, the government and other stakeholders to policy supporting collaborative working in local and sub-regional statutory planning policy documents.

Action 2: Monitor effectiveness and continued involvement of collectives in the Withington Village Development Plan

Policy instrument to be addressed: Non-Statutory Policy and Withington Village Development Plan

The footfall analysis conducted by the IPM, together with the development of an additional case study about the district centre of Withington during Stage 1 of the ABCities project, has been a key additional value to Manchester. The work influenced local traders, and prompted them to establish a new traders association, the *We are Withington* group. This new collective has added additional capacity to the existing place management network, the Withington Village Partnership, and is now a partner. The group is also now engaged in informing the development and implementation of the Withington Village Development Plan, a strategic regeneration framework which will affect the long term development of the centre. The action, therefore, proposes to monitor effectiveness and continued involvement of collectives in the Withington Village Development Plan over the next two years, as this will provide valuable insights into how collectives in other parts of the city can be supported by the municipality.

Action 1 To assess the views of the public, the government and other stakeholders to policy supporting collaborative working in local and sub-regional planning policy documents

Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

Other regional development policy instruments

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Manchester City Council Local Plan (Core Strategy)

Greater Manchester Combined Authority Spatial Framework

Background

In the UK, policy can be set at all levels of Government. National policy such as the National Planning Policy Framework is set by the National Government. Statutory planning policy documents are developed and adopted by municipalities, but the process is regulated by national law and overseen by the National Planning Inspectorate. The Manchester Local Plan and the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework are both statutory local planning policy documents.

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

The city of Manchester is one of ten municipalities forming a regional body - Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). Under the UK's devolution agenda, the GMCA gained enhanced powers in relation to planning and local economic development. The GMCA along with the ten

authorities is responsible for developing the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), a long-term regional development strategy up until 2037. Within this structure, is another regional body, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which is primarily responsible for EU Operational Programmes that concerns SME competitiveness. However, with Brexit, 2020 is the final year these programmes will operate in the UK. Going forward, therefore, the GMSF will become the principal policy document informing strategic regional development for Greater Manchester.

Although existing policy identifies clear objectives regarding the development of smaller and district centres, there is no direct encouragement for collaborative working. Currently, the only accepted mechanism within Greater Manchester to promote ABCE are Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). However, there are currently only four in operation across the whole GM region (Altrincham, Manchester city centre, Rochdale and Stockport), all of which are major town/city centres. In general, BIDs are seen as unviable within smaller centres. Subsequently, there remains a gap in relation to how ABCE can be supported across Greater Manchester, which has 70 significant smaller, local and suburban centres. The policy review, therefore, takes into account lessons learnt from inter-regional collaboration supported by the ABCitiEs project during Stage 1 of the project. For example, Manchester drew inspiration from Amsterdam's example of Business Improvement Zones (BIZs) presented at the inter-regional workshops.

Consequently, during Stage 2 of the ABCitiEs Project, Manchester will engage in a series of actions which will feed up local evidence concerning the nature and impact of local collectives to affect local trading conditions, to inform regional policy, to effect change not just for one municipality, but for all ten municipalities which make up the GMCA.

Manchester Local Plan

Whereas the GMSF sets the overall scale of development and general principles common to all Greater Manchester Districts, the detail is addressed within each municipality's Local Plan. It is at this level where clarity regarding the policy instruments is required.

Over recent decades, Manchester's approach to planning and regeneration has been focused on physical regeneration and property development, with the municipality working in partnership with private developers and other partners to transform the city. Whereas this approach has generated substantial investment, the benefits are largely concentrated in and around Manchester city centre. A concern now is how development could help to address social and spatial inequalities.

A key outcome for Manchester resulting from the inter-regional cooperation that took place during Stage 1 of the ABCitiEs project, concerns how the municipality has come to recognise that a more nuanced and sophisticated approach is required compared to the previous development model adopted by the city. The municipality has developed greater understanding of the need to avoid top-down prescriptive approaches, and instead promote more consensual place-specific interventions, worked out with local collectives across the city, engaging a wider range of place-based stakeholders.

The current Local Plan, known as the Manchester Core Strategy, is now under review. The first stage of the review was the 'Manchester Local Plan Issues Consultation (Feb 2020)'. With evidence presented from Stage 1 of the ABCitiEs project, the review includes the proposed objective to '**Support a network of distinctive high quality centres, strengthening local identity and essential services close to homes**' to ensure the benefit of economic development is spread across the city by creating multifunctional, thriving and attractive district centres.

Details of the Action Envisaged

The review of Manchester's Local Plan creates an opportunity to consider how the municipality can better support ABCE, with a long-term view that local collectives will take on a greater role in the management and development of district centres, working in partnership with the local authority, to deliver strategic objectives.

The partnership work between Manchester Metropolitan University and Manchester City Council, supported by the ABCitiEs project, therefore, will first introduce the concept of collaborative working by proposing additional wording to the draft GMSF then add further detail into the first draft of **Manchester's Local Plan**.

The first stage aims to embed policy support for collectives into regional policy as part of Manchester's input into the **Greater Manchester Spatial Framework** (GMSF). The ABCitiEs Manchester team, therefore, will propose an amendment to the current draft of the GMSF to address collaborative activity explicitly in planning policy. The Policy affected is **GM-Strat 12: Main Town Centres**, with the following proposed policy change (additional proposed text shown as bold):

The role of the main town centres as local economic drivers will continue to be developed, providing the primary focus for office, retail, leisure and cultural activity for their surrounding areas.
Businesses, service providers, community groups and other actors will be encouraged to work collaboratively to improve the vitality and viability of centres

This will go to public consultation in due course and eventually to Examination in Public.

The draft text for the Local Plan Policy is yet to be developed, but will build on **Policies C2 District Centres and C8 Local Centres** of the current Core Strategy along with the more specific area **policies C3 to C7**.

Requesting/requiring collaborative working will be a new concept for Planning Policy, so the statutory processes for developing both the GMSF and the Local Plan will be an opportunity to assess the views of the public and other stakeholders as well as the Government and its Planning Inspectorate's attitude.

Due to delay in development programmes, it will not be possible to monitor the effectiveness of the new policies during Phase 2 of the ABCitiEs project. The documents will not be adopted until 2022 (GMSF) and 2023 (Manchester Local Plan) therefore monitoring the impact of the new policy will be an on-going action covered by the Authority Monitoring Reports.

Timeframe

Preparation (Jan-July 2020)

- Finalise recommendations for Manchester City Council District Centre Subgroup (completed Feb 2020)
- Propose recommendations for adoption by Manchester City Council Economic Scrutiny Committee (agreed March 2020)
- Ratify recommendations by Manchester City Council Executive Group (date to be arranged, delayed due to Covid 19)

Implementation (July-ongoing)

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

- Consultation on final draft (Publication) - Nov to Dec 2020
- Submission to Secretary of State – tbc
- Examination of the plan – tbc
- Adoption – estimated 2022

Manchester Local Plan

A consultation is currently taking place on the scope of the Local Plan the indicative timescale for the full review is as follows:

- Prepare draft plan – consult in winter 2020/21*

- Publication of Manchester Local Plan – consult estimate summer/autumn 2021*
- Submission to Secretary of State – estimate winter 2021/early 2022*
- Examination of the plan – from spring 2022*
- Adoption of Manchester Local Plan – estimate spring 2023.*

*Due to Covid-19, timescales are to be reviewed and could be delayed by around 6 months.

Players involved

- Manchester City Council
- Institute of Place Management
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Costs and Funding Sources

Staff costs for preparation and implementation are covered from the budget of Manchester City Council, and for Manchester Metropolitan University, costs are calculated within ABCitiEs in semester 6,7, and 8

Action 2 Monitor effectiveness and continued involvement of collectives in the Withington Village Development Plan

Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

Other regional development policy instruments

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Non-statutory Policy: Place Management

Withington Regeneration Plan

Background

Whereas the Manchester Local Plan and the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework are both statutory local planning policy documents, not all municipal policy within the UK is set in a regulatory framework. Local councils can also adopt policy through internal governance structures. In Manchester, for example, a planning masterplan for an area or a particular approach to an issue will be developed by officers from the municipality, and usually after consultation, will be adopted as policy by the Council's Executive Committee.

Non-statutory Policy: Place Management

Prior to the ABCitiEs project, the IPM formed a partnership with Manchester City Council in 2016 to create the Vital and Viable Project (completed in January 2020). The purpose of this work was to evaluate the potential for embedding place management structures across the city, with a spatial focus on district centres. Consequently, the municipality installed automated footfall counters

in ten District Centres across the city. This data enabled the IPM to benchmark the functionality of the each district centre, and to establish how they were performing relative to one another. In addition, the IPM also completed four place management pilot-studies in Chorlton, Gorton, Harpurhey, and Northenden and produced action plans with recommendations specific to each area. This evidence provided a substantive evidence-base from which to build the research for ABCitiEs. Furthermore, with access to real-time footfall data, it was also possible to assess the impact of COVID19 on district centres, and their subsequent recovery.

During Stage 1 of the ABCitiEs project, the IPM produced an additional case study of Withington, together with an Action Plan also containing short and long-term recommendations. In addition, the IPM revisited the four original place management pilots and the five other centres in the original study where footfall counters are located, to map out the scope and capacity of local collectives in other district centres. From this evidence, it was established that there is evidence of ABCE in Manchester, but with the exception of Withington, the capacity of self-organising collectives to improve the local business environment is highly variable, poorly supported, and lacking co-ordination.

Following discussion between the IPM and Manchester City Council, the municipality has come to acknowledge the need to develop place leadership and management capacity within both the municipality's neighbourhood structures, but also within neighbourhoods themselves, through greater engagement with key place-based stakeholders from both the private and community sectors.

Withington Regeneration Plan

In alignment with the Manchester Local Plan (Core Strategy), local collectives in Withington have been key drivers in the promotion and development of a local Withington Village Plan.

Once adopted, this area-based plan will add local guidance to Core Strategy policy and inform developers of the joint vision and short and long-term aspirations of Manchester City Council, local residents and collectives for Withington district centre. With the first iteration of the plan to be presented to the municipality's Scrutiny and Executive meeting in September 2020, before going out to public consultation, it is at a stage which provides an opportunity to embed the recommendations from Stage 1 of the ABCitiES project. For instance, the development and implementation of the plan can be compared to the IPM recommendations from Stage 1, to gauge how collectives can become accommodated within the Local Area Plans process. By monitoring this process and sharing insights across the city, therefore, the intention is to develop additional guidance alongside the policy review, to inform how new and existing ABCE structures across the city can be embedded within non-statutory planning processes.

Given Stage 1 of the ABCitiEs project established there is a model of good practice in Withington, and with direct interventions undertaken in Withington because of the project, the ongoing monitoring, support and evaluation for this collective will provide further valuable insights

Details of the Action Envisaged

The Withington Action Plan provides recommendations for short and long-term interventions to be managed by collectives in the district centre. In addition, with live-footfall data there is an opportunity to measure the impact of interventions on the vitality of the district centre. This action, therefore, outlines a programme of collaboration and support for Withington, with the intention of drawing out insights which can inform the local area planning process across the city.

The first stage will engage local stakeholders with the IPM's Routemap to Place Transformation. This guidance was produced as a consequence of COVID19, and is designed to help places make informed decisions, which not only respond to the short-term impacts of social lockdown on local centres, but also engages places to consider the structural challenges facing high streets and town centres and plan adaptations, which will improve resilience and sustainability over the long-term.

The second stage, will involve revisiting the IPM recommendations, through a series of meetings and workshops with local stakeholders to consider how they might operationalise these proposals. This will include the development and agreement of proposals, which will:

- Create a process for routinely monitoring and sharing footfall data with key local stakeholders on local enterprises.
- Improve connectivity between the district centre and adjacent footfall anchors and residential areas.
- Create ideas for the temporary activation and re-use of vacant sites/stores.
- Consolidate improvements to the general appearance and public realm within the district centre.
- Evaluate the impact of place branding interventions.
- Consider centre diversification and the wider communication of the local offer.
- Raise capacity of local independent traders and key place based anchors to make evidence based decisions.
- Explore the potential for new collectives to add additional capacity to existing networks.

The final stage will reflect and evaluate the experience of the local collective's engagement with the planning process and working collaboratively with the Withington Regeneration Partnership. These insights will be collated and shared with both the municipality's senior policy teams, and neighbourhood structures.

Consequently, the Actions proposed for Stage 2, aim to develop a robust evidence base through which to inform the culture of working within the municipality, and to improve engagement with new and existing local collectives. In alignment with the first action, the intended outcome is that collectives become the primary mechanism through which to deliver the City's wider policy objective to support a network of distinctive high quality centres, strengthening local identity and essential services close to homes'.

Players involved

- Manchester City Council
- Institute of Place Management
- Withington Regeneration Partnership
- We Are Withington Traders Association
- Springboard Retail Intelligence

Timeframe

Stage 1

September 2020

Meeting with the Manchester ABCitiEs cross-sector steering group to agree scope and principles for monitoring and evaluating local collectives in Withington.

October 2020

Meeting with local stakeholders to work through the Routemap to Place Transformation.

Stage 2

November 2020

Workshop with local stakeholders to revisit the IPM's Place Management recommendations and to develop implementation plans.

January 2021

IPM and Springboard to lead training session with local stakeholders on analysing and sharing footfall data – for up to 30 participants.

IPM and Springboard to lead training session with neighbourhood officers from across the city – with at least one representative from each of the city's 17 district centres.

February 2021

IPM and MCC to reconvene Manchester ABCitiEs steering group to review progress of Stage 1 and 2.

March 2021

IPM to lead a place leadership and management workshop for local stakeholders – 30 participants from across public, private, and community sectors

April-May 2021

IPM to interview and surveys with all participants to gauge progress.

IPM led focus group with independent traders to reflect on their experience

June 2021

IPM to collate insights into an evaluation report.

July 2021

IPM to present findings to a cross-sector policy leads within the municipality.

Costs and Funding Sources

Staff costs for preparation and implementation are covered from the budget of Manchester City Council, and for Manchester Metropolitan University, costs are calculated within ABCitiEs in semester 6,7, and 8

