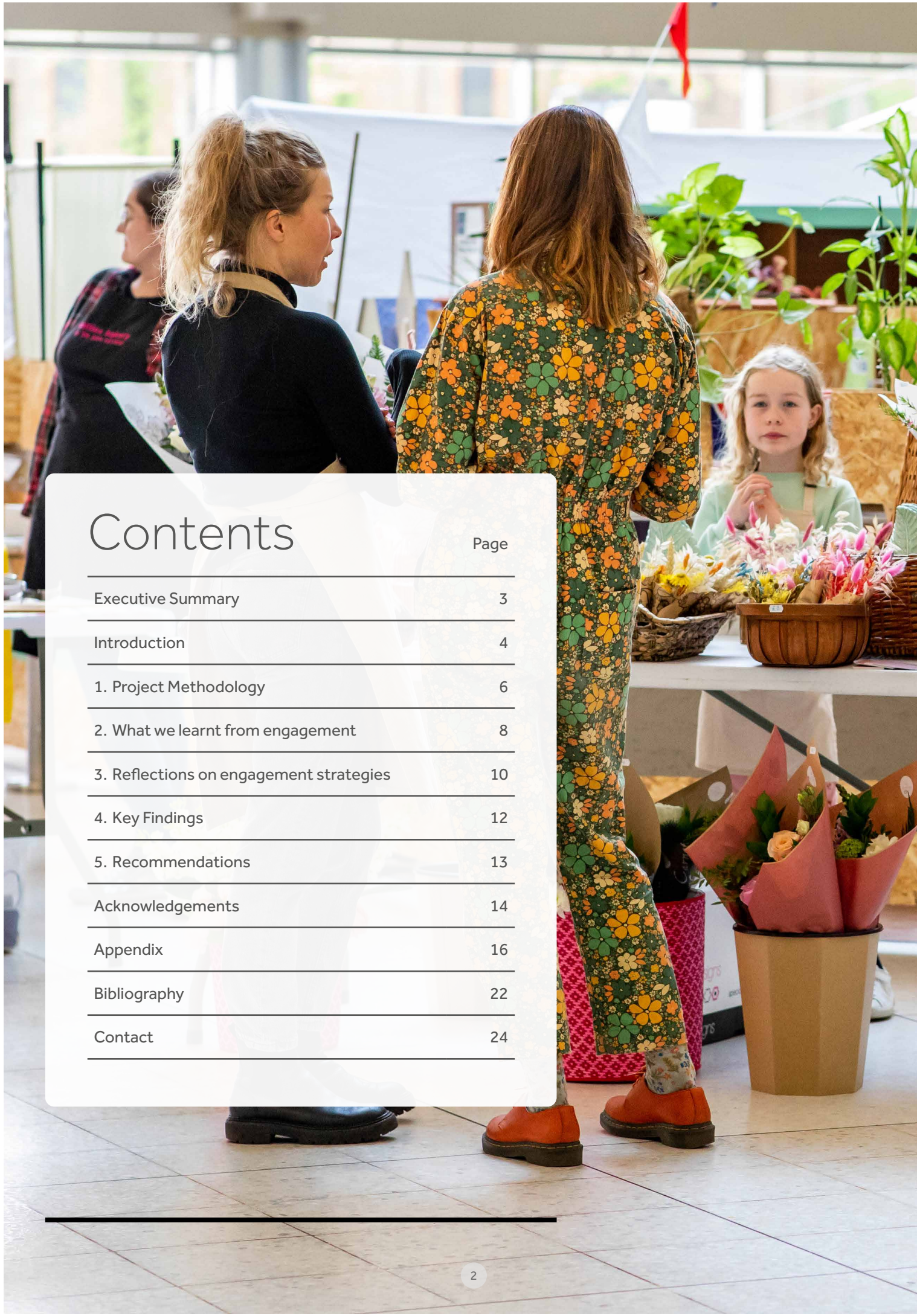# Placeholders
Report

Designing an inclusive process for engaging young people in place-making in Stretford – a collaboration between The University of Manchester and Bruntwood.

Report written by The University of Manchester team, with support from Bruntwood and Creative Manchester

The University of Manchester

bruntwood

creativemcr

Contents

Executive Summary

This report reflects on the activities and outcomes from the Placeholders project which emerged out of a collaboration between Bruntwood Group Ltd. and The University of Manchester. The project objectives were to create, test and refine a process for engaging young people in town centre place-making, with particular attention to young women as a recognised group who have been under-represented in past consultations[1]. Its aim was to encourage participation from communities with a specific focus on younger people within Stretford.

The project was conducted between April and November 2022 and involved the engagement with over 100 young people living, socialising or in education in the Stretford area. Participatory methods were adopted to overcome the challenges of involving young people within place-making processes. We also engaged with over 50 social, community, outreach and activity-based organisations who work with young people in the area and who helped facilitate, promote and in some cases co-host our events with their young people.

The project took place during an interim period of the Stretford Mall development; where planning permission has been achieved but before the implementation of construction work on the site.

The report offers reflections on and recommendations for facilitating participatory processes for engagement. A key recommendation is to carry out this process at an earlier stage of an urban development plan to help amplify the voice of young people as key users of public spaces

who can identify important and useful areas of action. Furthermore, the report recommends the dedication of someone with a permanent role in a stakeholder organisation to act as a continuous point of engagement with young people in Stretford, both during the time of participation and remaining a point of contact afterwards.

---

[1] "Young women" refers to those aged 13-17 as the report is aimed at adolescents who are often not actively included in processes. The lower age range of 13 is based on the UK rules for GDPR where children aged 13 years and over may lawfully provide their own consent for the processing of their personal data. The upper age limit is 17 as at the age of 18 young people enter into a different legal category under UK law.

Introduction

This report is divided into five sections as follows:

1 Project Methodology

2 What we learnt from engagement

3 Reflections on engagement strategies

4 Key findings

5 Recommendations

The Placeholders project was an outcome from a Business Engagement Innovation Lab convened by the University of Manchester Business Engagement team in March 2022, and was co-funded by The University of Manchester and Bruntwood. The Innovation Labs are designed to build bridges between the academic and business community, and this Lab focuses on collaborative approaches to placemaking. The name "Placeholders", devised and agreed on

the day, represents the timely nature of the project, taking place between more established methods of decision making and analysis, with this project *holding a place* for young people to express themselves and be heard.

This report aims to provide a tool to help improve the inclusion of young people in development projects, prior to the planning and eventual formalisation of visualisation of the neighbourhoods and realisation of plans.

This project has a particular focus on the Stretford Mall (acquired by Bruntwood in 2019) and its redevelopment, but is intended to help inform the strategies used by Bruntwood, and others, in their future social engagement activities which accompany urban development schemes in comparable neighbourhoods.

1

Project Methodology

The project involved overlapping work packages:

A Scoping and research: desk research including stakeholder mapping, literature review, secondary data mapping and analysis. Data sources include the #BeeWell Neighbourhood Data for Greater Manchester[2], demographic and asset data within the public domain, and anonymised engagement data from Royal Pilgrim provided by Bruntwood. See Appendix for Data Analysis report.

B Stakeholder engagement: initial consultation and regular ongoing meetings with project teams, engagement with community stakeholders, and youth-led consultation via community Young and Cultural Ambassadors.

C Design and execution of participatory programme: a series of engagement activities drew on research evidence and consultation, incorporating community co-hosted events, open space, market stalls and artist-led workshops. Analysis of anonymised feedback to inform final report.

Due in part to the project design process, which was instigated through the Innovation Lab, there was a short timeframe between agreement, engagement and implementation of the project, with the expectation that the overlapping phases of the project would last 6 months in total, ahead of reporting. There was therefore a need to maximise our time, and we chose to build on the existing resources, including secondary data and research that had been carried out locally and recently, to inform and orientate our own actions and eventual findings. Data availability was brokered by the partnership of the University with Bruntwood and their partners, which allowed us to undertake secondary analysis on existing research and data in the public domain and bring this together with existing research undertaken by consultation partner, Royal Prime.

The project was iterative: the approach to engagement was framed by findings from the first two phases. For example, the focus on young girls came from analysis of engagement data in the published #BeeWell report and early conversations with Bruntwood attendees of the

Innovation Lab and project meetings. Similarly, the decision to focus on spatial categories such as amenities, public realm and green space, and their usage, access, aesthetics, and sustainability came from data analysis and was used to frame questions within the engagement activities. Anonymised summary data from our engagement workshops be they online, in person, Ketso-led "engagement and envisioning" or as written responses, collectively inform the findings from the engagement, discussed below.

[2] uomseed.com/beewell-neighbourhoods/2022

Image: Stretford Social Market Stall

2

What we learnt from engagement

What the young people that we spoke to liked and disliked in public areas in Stretford.

Overall

Primarily, we learnt that the young people that we spoke to have strong feelings about the area that they live, work or frequent, and although those options are divergent and dependant on a number of factors, their opinions about and perceptions of place are heavily influenced by issues of access, safety, quality and condition of amenities. These informed how they felt about issues of personal safety, ownership and belonging within these spaces.

Many of the young people that we engaged with spoke of both physical and psychological barriers to their ability to enjoy or experience different public places in Stretford.

Transport limitations, such as areas of poor lighting (e.g. the underpass), vehicular prioritisation of the highway over pedestrian mobility, and the lack of a bus station near the tram stop came up frequently. In addition there were concerns about local services and shops that have closed, or been relocated, and haven't been replaced with services that provide a comparable level of amenity, convenience, or with inadequate opening hours. In addition, the general condition of the Mall was seen as needing attention with certain areas being poorly maintained, dirty or having fallen into disrepair or disuse.

Image: Perceptions of Stretford Mall using Mentimeter (anonymous online tool)

Stretford Mall development

When we asked our cohort about the Stretford Mall redevelopment, most were unaware of the development plans, or that there was a scheme that had been agreed and finalised. The majority hadn't seen any visualisation of the scheme before we showed representations to them in our workshops. There was a minority that had a general awareness that plans were being made for the mall, but by far the biggest group were those feeling a sense of impending change, especially as they could see the slow and steady emptying of the mall over the prevailing few years. This meant that most did not have a sense of time frame for these changes or what the new scheme would look like (figuratively or literally).

However, once we introduced them to the official scheme, they were engaged and opinionated, with many commenting on the nature of the proposed scheme. The scheme was understood as an opportunity for change and all participants could identify areas in need of improvement.

Some of the more familiar types of public realm improvements and building works proposed were seen positively, such as the improved connection to the river and the illuminated covered walkways. Other changes were viewed more sceptically, with the group's inability to assess and understand what would be happening in large parts of the scheme from the publicly available information. This was particularly true around the activities that are proposed for the larger "big box" buildings; and the types of activities that would be in the areas, such as the "makers market", were unclear to them. In general, they found it difficult to comment on the specificity of the proposal but were in favour of the additional greenery and improved connectivity.

Importantly, they seemed unaware of any strategies within the development which were directed towards them, people in their age group, or their use of public space in their daily lives.

Ideas

The many questions that arose around the nature of the spaces developed into propositions around habitation and use. These included questions around spaces for other faith groups; the affordability of the housing in new residential areas; and the nature of the urban greenery: would these be spaces that people could use similar to allotments? In this way, the questions raised and propositions were interlaced. We also encouraged less speculative proposals which included (but were not limited to):

- Designated areas for roller skating/ table tennis/ air hockey
- A welcoming cafe area
- a swimming pool
- a mural designed by young people
- additional bike parking
- some form of youth activity zone.

These and other ideas that they proposed are captured in the section on the workshops phase. The examples here are to illustrate our main observation, that once we asked, the young people had a plethora of ideas that they were willing to share that were informed by their experience of the area.

Image: Ketso board from Stretford Town Hall event

3

Reflections on engagement strategies

The aim of this approach was to test and develop urban problem solving that engages young people that could be returned to and built upon by future studies and practitioners.

The opportunity presented by this project was matched by some of its challenges, particularly in establishing consensus of approach and coordinating a diverse team of practitioners who have not worked together previously. The need to rapidly develop applicable methods of engagement with a new cohort group must be understood within these operational challenges. Time was needed to align interests and outputs that worked for all parties within the

collaborative process. Establishing modes of practice was challenging as even elemental terms such as "engagement" have different meanings across different fields which required the group to work collaboratively to establish what this and other terms meant within the parameters of this short project. There were also different expectations about the time allocated for this project which had to be overcome in real time as the project developed.

Ultimately, one of the key barriers to designing a quick and simple engagement strategy was having a consistent contact embedded within both parties engaged in the Placeholders project. This would allow for mediation and coordinated exchanges between stakeholders working on the development and the researchers and organisers working on the project. This needs to be considered as a necessary element to allow for continuity of approach to the project management.

A great amount of organisational administration was required from dedicated personnel both from the academic and business side of the partnership. Time was needed to identify personnel from both parties. Without this continuity there is a constraint on some of the decision making and ongoing delivery of the project. Having dedicated parties with time and remit to commit to the project allows for active collaboration in decision-making phases and the delivery of engagement activities.

Without this continuity, agreeing key issues (outlined below) are more difficult to establish before commencement. Below is a brief overview of how we worked through these issues to deliver engagement within the project:

Establishing safeguarding

Working with young people requires strategies to ensure that risk and harm is minimised as well as safeguarding their anonymity. This often means working within the engagement parameters of groups who already have these measures in place and operating our project under their guidelines rather than establishing our own. We also ensured that young people's anonymity was protected with no personal data collected or recorded.

Engaging stakeholders and gatekeepers

We worked with existing networks and individuals who acted as gatekeepers, and who we could contact and liaise with to ensure that young people would be willing to attend our events. Establishing trust in such a short timescale is difficult, so we were dependent on making good contact with the established network of youth workers in the area. We had to establish a contract list from scratch of the established networks before we could begin to construct the strategy for working with them. Whilst working alongside these gatekeepers we also had to ensure that we are not attempting to duplicate or undermine any ongoing work that they may already be doing and a lot of time was put into making sure that we could establish continuity of aims and outcomes with them.

Designing workshops and engagement activities

As we wanted to speak to as wide a range of young people as possible, and given the time constraints, we undertook research identifying existing programmes and opportunities for young people which may provide suitable spaces and activities through which we could engage with a suitable cohort. We looked at school supported activities, after school clubs and religious and political groups. We included outreach activities (meeting young people in the public spaces where they congregate) as well as special interest (e.g. based on gender or ethnic identities) and or activity clubs (e.g. dance clubs or other cultural activities).

Once we established these parameters of working, we asked participants a series of questions which were developed through the data analysis in phase A, around usage, access, amenities, aesthetics, sustainability and green spaces.

The key tool used during engagement was the Ketso board[3], designed to capture the ideas and potential resolutions to problems identified within a particular group. This system was used as a benchmark practice by which others could be constructed in comparison, as example of (1) working cumulatively with an idea or observation and (2) developing it into a practical solution or emerging proposal. Crucially in between these phases is a (3) method of tracking the way by which consensus and consolidation of ideas is reached, so that process is as important as outcome.

One of the challenges for replicability of the engagement process is that once contacts and networks have been identified for community stakeholders who can support and participate in consultation, the value of these contacts is often lost due to the need for data security and GDPR compliance. This was an issue on this project, where we needed to ensure anonymity but wanted to signpost to the networks we had identified. This is an issue for sharing information of those involved in consultation and engagement between private, public and third sector groups, in general.

Stakeholder connections

The project aimed to be useful for stakeholders who work in similar ways or may have different engagement strategies with the same cohort. Often during the project, we found that their knowledge on the ground exceeded our own, however there were occasions where this project brought similarly interested parties into the same room who otherwise would not have been (i.e. a secondary school teacher and an outreach worker). The project therefore had to some degree a convening role and added value through the connections and potential future collaborations that were made as a result of bringing people together.

[3] See ketso.com

4 Key Findings

Engaging young people in consultation on matters that are perceived as outside their everyday life and interests is challenging.

The investment of time in understanding the stakeholder communities that young people do engage with, and the places and spaces in the neighbourhood in which they are located, is critical to encouraging participation and to communicating the significance of the potential changes that placemaking and development can bring. Using physical, creative activities and joining in existing events helped us gain access to young people's ideas and perceptions of Stretford and to inform them and involve them in thinking about the area and its proposed development.

Once engaged, young people and those who work with them were very happy to give their time, energy, and creativity to this process. From the evidence of positive engagement, our recommendation would be to carry out this process at an earlier stage of an urban development plan as it may help to amplify the voice of young people, to aid the developer in being more inclusive in the design of public spaces and identify important and useful areas of action. Perspectives that may be overlooked or unseen by decision makers and adults can be identified, and a project of this nature makes that a possibility.

The overall structure of the project has allowed us to realise most of the aims and objectives as outlined by the initial collaboration agreement. The mixture of creative and pragmatic opportunities was largely successful, in particular the collaborative process of workshopping with groups of young people and adults. Both local decision makers and local community and engagement workers seemed to garner great results, a practice which we argue is worth building upon in future consultations.

Having established connections with young people and stakeholders in the neighbourhood, there is the opportunity now to continue such a process. However, one barrier to the efficacy of the project was aligning aims and objectives between the two collaborating partners whose teams had changing memberships with other commitments and whose dedicated time on the project was fractional. Ideally the team would include at least one member who operates as a continuous point of engagement with the young people, both during the time of the workshops and afterwards (although we recognise the resource limitations to facilitate this).

This would help address the general episodic nature of engagement projects to provide continuity after the engagement and listening exercises, to showcase or make visible how ideas and propositions informed the final plans, supporting a community 'feedback loop'.
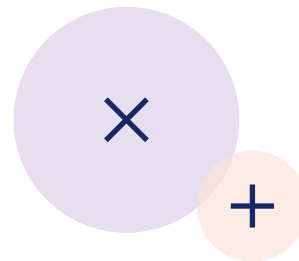
5 Recommendations

To carry out this process of **engagement at an earlier stage** of an urban development plan.

To plan for a project team that would include one member who operates as a **continuous point of engagement with the young people**.

A broader strategy to **combat the episodic nature of engagement projects** i.e. by developing a consistent strategy that informs a coherent integrated approach across urban development projects.

A strategy of **providing public information** on the nature of the proposal i.e. making public the timescale and the introduction of key amenities.

To avoid the loss of data, particularly those of key stakeholders and their engagement practices, we would recommend that a **key agency or intermediary that could 'hold' the data** and/or provide the resource for data compliance that would be useful across multiple projects.

Consider the possibilities of prioritising/ scheduling at earlier phases, public realm improvements i.e. the possibility of **addressing ongoing issues on site of user safety and pedestrian access** during the development period.

A meanwhile strategy that maintains the level of service, operating times and, activity and during the transitional period, avoiding a drop off in amenity that often accompanies urban development projects.

Maintaining the physical conditions of the development site – so that the development does not lead to areas falling into disrepair during the transitional period.
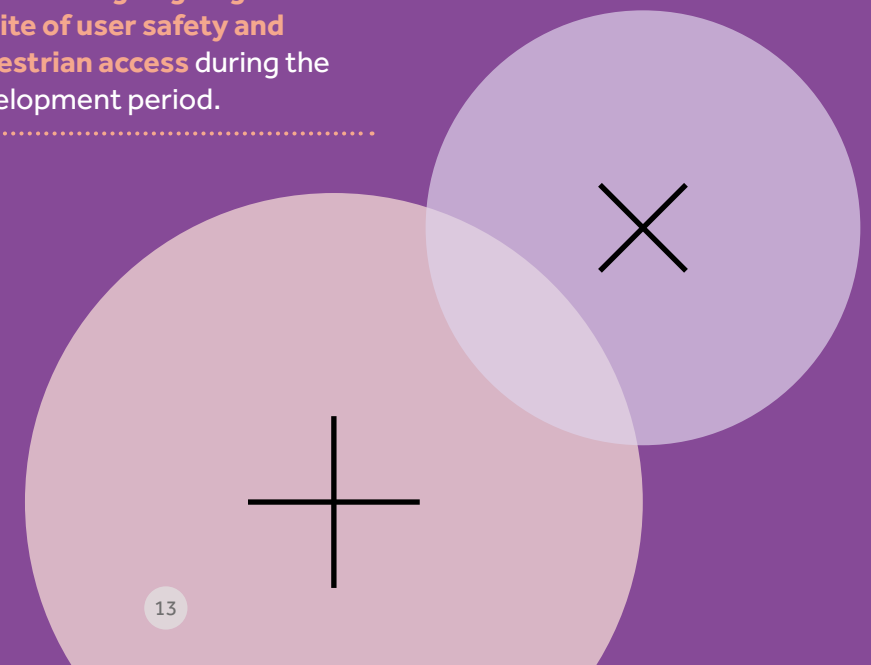
Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank everyone involved in the teams and groups that participated in this project:

The University of Manchester Research Team

- Abigail Gilmore
- John McAuliffe
- Carl Fraser
- Ailbhe Treacy
- Elena Brearley
- Joanne Tippett
- Andrew Miles

Bruntwood Team

- Bethany Adam
- Kat Brown
- Lydia Skinner
- Amanda Lyons
- Andrea George
- Hayley Flynn
- Jade Weeder

Stakeholder Groups

- Stretford Public Hall
- Trafford Talkshop
- Youth Summit/ Gorse Hill Studios
- Friends of Victoria Park
- Girl Guiding (Stretford and Old Trafford)
- Youth Cabinet/ Gorse Hill Studios
- Bruntwood – "Stretford Socials"
- Dance Class/Gorse Hill Studios
- 6th Stretford Guides
- Methodist Church (Stretford and Urmston)

With many thanks also to all those who gave their time to contribute and participate in the project not listed above.

Appendix
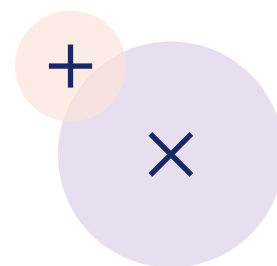
Data analysis report – written by Ailbhe Treacy

Literature review on Young Women's Use of Public Space

Academic research into young women's use of public space is sparse (Walker and Clark 2020). While gender mainstreaming of public space is gaining popularity, research and planning in this area often concerns adults rather than young people. A review of relevant literature finds that girls are less likely to make use of public space than boys; a discrepancy that appears early in life and persists into adulthood. In particular, amenities for exercise are not used with confidence by girls, with negative impacts on their wellbeing. Women are less likely to be consulted on public planning, leading to a continued creation of spaces excluding young women and girls.

Research suggests that young women use public space with less confidence than their male counterparts, particularly with regards to sports and leisure facilities. These discrepancies can be seen in girls as young as 10, with young women "almost half as physically active as boys well before they reach their teens" (RPTI/Oxfam 2007). The charity Make Space for Girls suggests that this is due, in part, to boys' deliberate attempts at exclusion. As a result, girls are likely to seek out known empty spaces rather than populate areas used by boys (Walker and Clark 2020).

There is evidence to suggest that this discrepancy in access to public space is detrimental for the well-being of young women. One study conducted by The Children's Society suggests that participation in sporting activities has a profound impact on young people's well-being. This research also found that young women were less likely than boys to take part in these activities. Girls were roughly 10% less likely to take part in team sports regularly, and roughly 15% less likely to take part in non-team exercise (Abdallah et al. 2014). This finding is consistent with research suggesting that young women are less likely to take part in exercise due to lack of suitable spaces. Further to this, participation in these activities was associated with significantly larger improvements in well-being for girls than for boys (Abdallah et al. 2014).

The Children's Society also compared wellbeing scores, using a reduced Huebner scale, which ranged from 0 to 20, to examine age as an indicator of well-being. Well-being scores decreased from 14.6 out of 20 for children aged 10-11 to 13.0 for 15 year-olds. Those aged 15 were significantly less likely to take part in physical activities than those aged 10 to 12. This suggests that young women aged 13 to 15 are particularly unlikely to engage with exercise, with detrimental impacts to their well-being (Abdallah et al. 2014).

Focus groups conducted by the Children's Society found that friendships were a vital part of young people's well-being. However, lack of access to public space was viewed as a major barrier to engaging with other young people. In particular, transport and cost were cited by participants as preventing them from spending time with friends in public (Abdallah et al. 2014).

Research suggests that differences in the use of public space can be aggravated by planning procedures. Women encounter more obstacles than men when engaging with planning processes. These obstacles can include conflicting commitments (such as caring responsibilities) or reluctance to engage in mixed gender spaces. The disparity in engagement with planning is more extreme for disabled women (RPTI/Oxfam 2007). As a result, public spaces are often designed with young men's usage in mind. A case study conducted by Make Space for Girls found that "[one] town council had spent £127,000 on facilities used predominantly by boys and were contemplating part funding another £350,000 of investment in similar infrastructure. Precisely nothing had been spent on facilities used mainly by girls" (Walker and Clark 2020).

Attitudes Towards Public Space in Stretford

Several consultations have been conducted pertaining to public space in Stretford. Raw data from consultations conducted by Royal Pilgrim between November 2019 and September 2021 have been submitted for the purposes of this research.

Throughout several stages of these consultations, Royal Pilgrim gathered anonymous demographic data. Of the 261 responses supplied, only 1.53% were under the age of 21, while 3.19% reported being in full-time education. The largest age group to take part in consultations (34.1%) were between the ages of 36 and 45. Whilst no data have been provided on the gender of participants, project partners confirmed that the consultations conducted by Royal Pilgrim saw low levels of engagement from young women between the ages of 13 -15.

In January 2018, Royal Pilgrim disseminated online and in-person questionnaires, collecting 1,519 responses related to the Stretford Masterplan. Of those respondents, only 4.37% were aged 18 or younger. 68.7% of respondents were between the ages of 30 and 60. 57.32% of respondents identified as female.

Questionnaires were used to understand Stretford residents' top three priorities within their locality. The choices, in descending order of popularity, are as follows:

- Fully involving the local community in plans and implementation (57.47%)
- Bringing new investment into the area (29.78%)
- Ensuring leisure facilities and the library are accessible to public and schools (28.77%)
- Bringing vacant and derelict units and key buildings back into use (23.48%)
- Improving traffic flow and public transport links (23.41%)
- Improving pedestrian and cycle routes (23.17%)
- Creating more attractive public spaces (22.4%)
- Improving the retail offer in the town centre (20.45%)
- Developing the evening/nightlife economy (19.44%)
- Ensuring there is no decline in housing stock in the area (16.64%)
- The design of Lacy Street accommodation is appropriate for the surrounding area (16.02%)
- Ensuring that services and amenities are able to accommodate the new student population (12.99%)
- Controlling impact on house prices (12.29%)
- Being brave with the vision and plans for Stretford (11.74%)
- Opening up access to the Bridgewater Canal (9.72%)

Stretford Mall

Usage

Consultations conducted in January 2020 and September 2021 gathered data on how Stretford Mall is used by local residents. The results show that Stretford residents generally make good use of the Mall. However, usage varied between both consultations. In September 2021, 73.49% of respondents reported visiting Stretford Mall more than once a week. Only 8.43% of respondents reported using the Mall monthly or less. This is a sharp rise from usage reported in January 2020. 48.04% of respondents reported visiting Stretford Mall more than once a week, with 33.33% using the Mall once per week.

During the January 2020 consultation, residents were also asked to list their reason for visiting the Mall on the day of the consultation:

Activity	Percentage of Responses
Food shopping	19.28
Clothes and general shopping	28.67
Café/Restaurant	17.41
To use services	15.02
Only to attend consultation	19.62

Appendix

Access

Data from January 2020 suggest that most residents access the Mall **by foot (47.74%)**, followed by access via bikes (31.66%) and car (17.09%). Issues in accessing Stretford Mall (and the wider town centre) are often cited within Royal Pilgrim's consultations. Residents feel strongly that the A56 has prevented facilities, such as Stretford Mall, from reaching their full potential. Many Stretford residents have stated that the pedestrian crossings along the A56 are inadequate, as well as citing issues with air and noise pollution.

Many suggestions have been made by residents regarding possible improvements to accessing the Mall. These include:

- Better pedestrian crossings along the A56, particularly at the Aldi entrance to Stretford Mall
- Dedicated cycle lanes/highways
- Underground pedestrian crossings
- Diversion of traffic to nearby roads

Bruntwood's Commonplace survey found that residents were in favour of de-engineering major roads, such as Kingsway, in order to improve accessibility within Stretford town centre.

The 90 survey responses were distributed as follows:

Rating	Percentage
Happy	32%
Satisfied	19%
Neutral	35%
Dissatisfied	10%
Unhappy	3%

However, a number of comments stated that the plans to de-engineer Kingsway would not go far enough to substantially improve accessibility issues. Most respondents highlighted the need for a de-engineering of the A56 for this plan to achieve its intended aims:

"The improvements to Kingsway are very welcome but I'm disappointed to see very little changes to Chester Road which is the main obstacle separating the mall area from the tram stop and the canal."

Amenities

A common theme within most of the consultations is the issue of empty lots within the Mall. Residents attribute these empty lots to expensive commercial rents. Many also point to the Mall's limited opening times as a reason for lack of business. A number of consultation responses recommended extending opening hours into the evening in order to increase footfall within shops and businesses.

Overall, the consensus among respondents was firmly in favour of prioritising small businesses over chains. Many respondents felt that larger companies could be accessed in spaces such as the Trafford Centre. Independent businesses were viewed as a means of making Stretford Mall a destination for shoppers, as well as maintaining a 'village feel'. Suggestions for future lots included:

- Event spaces (for conferences, small gigs, cinema screenings, talks, exhibitions)
- Artists' studios/rehearsal space
- Residential units
- Healthcare (e.g. dentist, doctor's surgery)
- Play cafe
- Bars/restaurants/foodhalls (including a rooftop bar)
- Indoor sports spaces (e.g. roller rink, bowling)
- Space for market stalls
- A hotel (in place of the offices)
- Short lets to charitable societies
- College campus
- Pop-up/seasonal shops
- Charity shops
- Work hub (e.g. hot-desking space)
- Wellbeing space (e.g. somewhere offering yoga, cooking classes, mental health awareness, board games groups)
- Services (e.g. Hairdressers)

Bruntwood's Commonplace survey suggests that Stretford residents are largely in favour of reconstructing Stretford Mall in order to introduce a new highstreet and town square.

The 68 responses to the survey were distributed as follows:

Rating	Percentage
Happy	60%
Satisfied	19%
Neutral	13%
Dissatisfied	1%
Unhappy	1%
No Rating (comment only)	4%

Comments related to the Mall included:

"This, I feel, will be the best part of the regeneration. I frequent the Foodhall a lot and also a couple of the bars on occasion and there is nothing worse than having to walk all the way around the Mall to get to there in the evenings. This is Bruntwood and Trafford Councils chance to blow Sale, Urmston and possibly Chorlton out of the water when it comes to 'go to destinations'. Don't skimp and be bold as that's what the people of Stretford want."

"What is there for teenagers? Why can't we have a skate park in this area for them? Otherwise yes I like it."

"Keeping current stores and bringing in new is key to this proposal. It's great having somewhere to eat but you will encourage more footfall if people have been shopping first. So the rents and rates need to be affordable or we will lose Stretford to Sale, Altrincham and Urmston. We have an elderly community that like to shop local. We also need to ensure local people have jobs. So hopefully the current stores will stay."

Aesthetics

A number of comments have been raised, in all consultations, regarding the look and feel of Stretford Mall.

Suggestions for aesthetic improvements included:

- Uniform signage for shop fronts
- Eye-catching window displays within lots
- New frontage for the building
- Further improvements to the Mall entrance

A number of comments responding to Bruntwood's Commonplace survey relate to aesthetic concerns regarding the Mall and its surroundings:

"It's such a shame the original King Street was demolished. So the new design needs to be classic to stand the rest of time unlike Stretford Mall."

"The multi storey car park is a massive eyesore. If nothing else there needs to be some kind of facade installed over the outer surface."

Sustainability and Green Spaces

Stretford residents have shown widespread concern regarding the environmental impact of future developments. The vast majority of participants within consultations were in favour of preserving existing green spaces. Many suggested the addition of new green spaces, including a green space on the roof of the Mall. Some respondents asked questions regarding sustainable energy sources for the Mall.

Residents were clear that any additional green spaces should be properly maintained:

"We definitely need as much green space as possible, but we need commitment and budget to upkeep it over time. Green spaces quickly become overgrown and scruffy, and Trafford's parks and gardens and play areas are insufficiently maintained at present. My local park relies on volunteer teams to clear pathways of weeds and clear leaves in Autumn etc."

Issues surrounding green space are particularly pertinent in Stretford, which has been found lacking in provision for local residents. Fields in Trust's Green Spaces research has found that all neighbourhoods in Stretford are below the Green Space Index (GSI) minimum standard of provision of 1. In fact, Stretford's GSI is below half of the minimum standard, at 0.41. On average, Stretford residents have access to 14.35 square metres of green space per person (Fields in Trust 2022).

These findings are consistent with the English Indices of Deprivation (IoD), produced by the Office for National Statistics. One indicator of deprivation is the Living Environment Domain, which measures the quality of indoor and outdoor environments, including measures of air quality and road traffic accidents (Noble et al. 2019). The average Living Environment rank for Stretford is 4, indicating that the average neighbourhood in Stretford is among the 40% most deprived in England (Office for National Statistics 2019).

Appendix

Young Women's Use of Public Space in Stretford

There are relatively few sources from which to draw data on young women's use of public space in Stretford. However, some illuminating findings have come from the the #BeeWell survey, a study of young people's wellbeing in Greater Manchester. In 2021, the survey was disseminated to 37,713 pupils across 142 secondary schools across the 67 neighbourhoods of Greater Manchester (#BeeWell Programme Team 2021b). The #BeeWell survey measures wellbeing based on a number of metrics, including autonomy, leisure, and environment/society.

Our analysis of these survey responses found that young women in Trafford North are **more than 6% less likely** than their male counterparts to feel that they can access good places to spend their time. **74.2%** of the 224 young women surveyed agreed that there are good places to spend their free time. In contrast, **80.5%** of the 284 young men surveyed agreed with this statement (#BeeWell Programme Team 2021a).

Young women in North Trafford were also **4.5% less likely** than young men to report feeling safe in their area. **55.5%** of the 167 young women surveyed agreed that they could trust people in their area. **60%** of the 212 young men surveyed agreed with the same statement. In general, fewer young women responded to questions related to the local environment than young men (#BeeWell Programme Team 2021a).

Young women in Trafford North reported autonomy scores in line with the mean for Greater Manchester, with 66% reporting that they can almost always or often do things that they like in their spare time. The most popular leisure activity for young women from North Trafford was physical exercise, with **56% taking part at least once per week**. This was followed by miscellaneous creative hobbies (52%), reading for enjoyment (42%), playing computer games (41%) and drawing or painting (37%) (#BeeWell Programme Team 2021a).

Although girls in Trafford North reported high instances of engaging with physical activity, they were **4% less likely** to do so regularly than the average for girls across Greater Manchester. They were also unlikely to meet or exceed the Chief Medical Officer's recommendation of at least one hour of physical activity per day. Only **32.7%** of young women in Trafford North took part in at least an hour's physical exercise, a figure that is slightly below the Greater Manchester average of **34.5%** for young women (#BeeWell Programme Team 2021a).

In January 2018, Royal Pilgrim disseminated to all Trafford Secondary School Head-teachers a questionnaire designed to capture the views of Year 11 pupils. 102 responses were received, primarily from Stretford High School. The summary of findings provided by Royal Pilgrim did not include demographic data.

This questionnaire largely consisted of questions related to the UA92 plans. Overall, respondents spoke positively of the University and its potential to give opportunities to local students. Many were enthusiastic about its focus on media, business and sport. When asked about concerns related to the new university, the most commonly cited issues were related to transport, particularly traffic and the strain on public transport. Most young people reported positive attitudes towards a future influx of students, stating that this would add to the diversity and liveliness of Stretford.

In November 2018, Royal Pilgrim conducted in-person consultations targeted towards young people at the Trafford Youth Conference and Youth Engagement Event. There is no indication within the consultation result as to the number of attendees or their demographics. When asked how Stretford town centre could be improved, young people were most concerned with leisure facilities, followed by additional shops and parks.
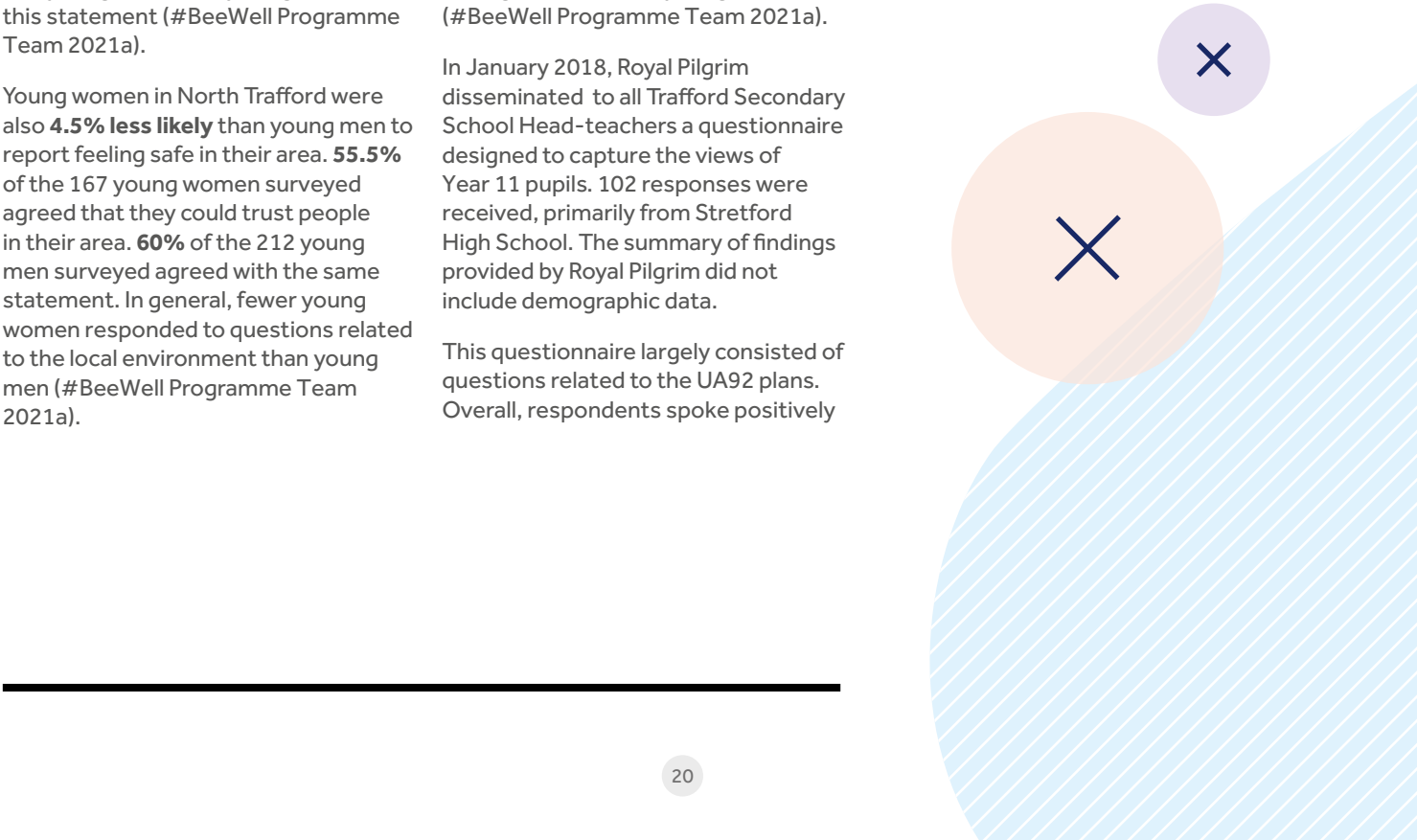
Bibliography

Abdallah, S., Main, G., Pople, L. and Rees, G. (2014). *Ways to Well-being:Exploring the links between children's activities and their subjective well-being.* [Online] The Children's Society. Available at: <https://eprints.whiterose. ac.uk/82855/1/SCways.pdf> [Accessed 21 June 2022]

#BeeWell Programme Team (2021a). *#BeeWell measures (2021 survey).* Manchester: University of Manchester. Available at: <https://uomseed.com/beewell-neighbourhoods/2021/measures/> [Accessed 21 June 2022]

#BeeWell Programme Team (2021b). *#BeeWell neighbourhood report (2021).* Manchester: University of Manchester. Available at: <https://uomseed.com/beewell-neighbourhoods/2021/measures/> [Accessed 21 June 2022]

Fields in Trust (2022). *Green Space Index 2022.* London: Fields in Trust. Available at: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/5301c55a8189410b9428a90f05596af4?data_id=dataSource_9-1808ea356c1-layer-8-1808ea3573b-layer-12%3A13259> [Accessed 1 July 2022]

Noble, S., McLennan, D., Noble, M., Plunkett, E.,Gutacker, N., Silk, M. and Wright, G (2019). The English Indices of Deprivation 2019: Research report. London: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833947/IoD2019_Research_Report.pdf [Accessed 1 July 2022]

Office for National Statistics (2019). Indices of Deprivation 2019 local authority dashboard. London: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Available at: <http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html> [Accessed 1 July 2022]

RPTI/Oxfam. (2007). *Gender and Spatial Planning: RTPI good practice note 7.* London: RTPI.

Walker, S. and Clark, I. (2020). *Make Space for Girls: Everything you need to know in one (relatively) easy document.* [Online] Make Space for Girls. Available at: <https://makespaceforgirls.co.uk/research/> [Accessed 21 June 2022]
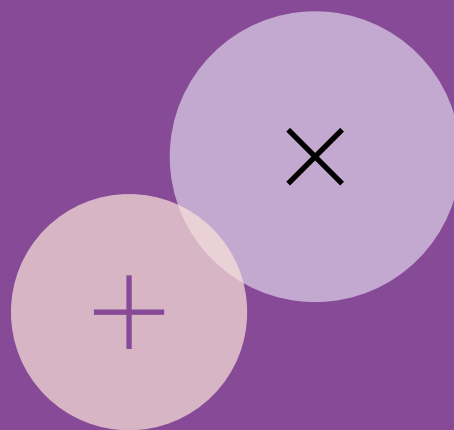
To reference this report:
Fraser, C., Gilmore, A., Treacy, A. and
Brearley, E (2024) *Placeholders Report:
Designing an inclusive process for
engaging young people n place-making
in Stretford – a collaboration between
The University of Manchester and
Bruntwood*, Creative Manchester/
The University of Manchester.

Contact: Creative Manchester
email: creative@manchester.ac.uk

𝕏 f ⓘ @UoMCreativeMCR in @Creative Manchester at The University of Manchester

www.creative.manchester.ac.uk