

case study

Northmoor Manchester



How a 19th Century neighbourhood has been transformed to meet the needs and aspirations of its 21st Century community

A decade of work by Great Places Housing Group, Manchester City Council and Northmoor Community Association, and about 15 other key partners, has transformed the Northmoor area of Longsight in Manchester.

Ten years ago it was a crime-ridden no-go area of boarded-up homes with a disenfranchised, disillusioned community. Now it is a busy, vibrant and diverse place where people want to live, work and invest. Our journey has taken an area of dense 19th Century housing – poor in quality and choice of size and tenure – and turned it into a neighbourhood that can meet people's 21st Century needs and aspirations. Now this great location, three miles from Manchester city centre, is revitalised and faces a bright future.



By reclaiming the streets through Homezones we have created safe places for children to play.

The challenges we faced

In 2002, Great Places had no waiting list for its 200 houses in Northmoor and paid tenants £50+ in vouchers to move there. Now the Manchester Housing Register waiting times are three to four years for a two-bedroom house and five-plus years for a three-bedroom house. Two-up two-down terraces that could be bought for £10,000 in 2001 are now worth over £100,000.

Great Places currently has 260 homes in the area, and has worked hard to create a greater choice of size, type and tenure, including large, new-build family houses. Some terraces now have loft conversions to provide extra space, others have been knocked through to create larger, more family-friendly homes. Residents have been key to shaping the vision for a place with less crime, more green space, bigger and better-quality houses and quieter streets.

Residents and MCC's Private Sector Housing Team were adamant that they did not want to see wholesale demolition. A concept plan for the whole area was drawn up in 1997 before any changes were proposed. This made sure that work across housing, environmental and social issues was carried out within a very clear framework of the community's needs and aspirations.

Regeneration case study

Northmoor

Services and solutions delivered so far

The planning process began in 1997 and most of the tangible improvements have been realised in the last five years. The community now has a real hub in the grade II listed Great Places-owned Northmoor Community Centre, an ornate former Co-op, used by many local groups, and the nearby low-cost Northmoor Community Laundrette, run by volunteers. Roads have been remodelled with some terrace houses demolished to create shorter, more pedestrian-friendly rows, and attractive 'breathing spaces' for play and socialising.



In the heart of Northmoor stands the imposing three-storey old Co-op building, now home to the Community Centre

New houses are in co-ordinating red brick and cream-coloured render. Our pioneering Home Zones, were the first in the UK. They halved traffic volumes and drew attention from regenerators all over. Here, pedestrians take precedence and street furniture and parking spaces outside houses are arranged to slow traffic down to a less-than-10mph crawl.

Great Places has now taken the concept to Werneth, Oldham, with equally impressive results. Brightly-coloured bollards, wall-mounted street lights and some hanging baskets are all key features. Alleys have been gated to reduce crime and foster community spirit. Residents are encouraged to use the alleys as extensions to their back yards, and to put out benches and plants where people want to. Blanket facelift work such as re-pointing and adding railings at fronts of houses has been carried out, regardless of ownership. This evolutionary rather than revolutionary transformation has been cost-effective and kept the traditional character of the area.

“The grade II listed Northmoor Community Centre is a real community hub”



The 'green streets' break up the traditional terraced housing

Great results

In a recent Great Places survey, more than three quarters of residents said they were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their neighbourhood and many commented on how much they felt Northmoor had improved. Another measurable outcome is the 'designing out' of crime and anti-social behaviour. Previously, Northmoor streets had been used as dangerous rat-runs by commuters in the day and joy riders at night.

Safety and peace have been improved and streets have been reclaimed by residents. After consultation which established residents wanted more staff 'on the ground', a team of wardens was set up, and continue to make a huge impact. A revamped community scene driven by the regeneration partnership is now the 'glue' that holds the neighbourhood together.

Ten years on from first ideas of intervention, the Northmoor area is shining example of what can be achieved given the right partnership, steered and bolstered by the community it is serving. One of Great Places' latest initiatives - with support from the Homes and Communities Agency - is a development of 36 affordable new homes for sale, including 15 regenerated two-up two-down terraces which have had an extra floor added to turn them into four-bedroom family homes. This bold statement shows how far Northmoor has come, and points to its bright future.

Regeneration case study

Northmoor

“Regeneration like this needs impetus and leaps of faith”

Inspiration for other regenerators

Being realistic and planning for the long term is important – alongside the need for vision and a clear framework. The success of Northmoor is down to partnership working and ‘champions’ from each organisation who drive progress with enthusiasm. Regeneration like this needs impetus and leaps of faith – and the ability to be pragmatic and flexible, and to compromise. Perhaps most important is to understand the context in which you’re working, and being creative in your involvement structures as you reach the hard to reach.



Gold-themed statues drew attention to our Housing Corporation Gold Award success at a fun day



Northmoor is becoming popular with young professionals looking for ‘city-centre’ living but can’t afford the high rental costs



Resident Evelyn Uche and the gated alley behind her home



A well-lit Home Zone by night

Regeneration case study

Northmoor

Children playing on one to the green streets



Northmoor Community Association has more than 200 members and has played a vital role in the regeneration process. The ornate, grade II listed Co-op building is a focus for the community, housing Northmoor Community Centre. Groups based here include sewing, health and slimming clubs, a playgroup and crèche, IT drop-in sessions, arts and crafts, information sessions and Credit Union. There is also a

homework and out-of-school clubs for eight to 16-year-olds, and weekend meetings of the Eritrean Community, Local Church Group, Manchester Mencap Social Group and Asian Women's Business Support Group. Three paid staff oversee the running of the centre which has 450 to 500 users per week.

Northmoor Community Laundrette has 200 users per week who take advantage of cheaply-priced laundry and

PCs with internet access. Services include pick-up and drop-off for elderly customers. The award winning South Manchester Community Wardens, managed and part-funded by Great Places, continue to have a significant impact on community confidence as the eyes and ears of the streets. Their input in to local schools has a positive impact. Work includes:

- Patrolling the streets
- Making sure empty

properties are secured and rubbish removed

- Encouraging children to take ownership of the area through a junior warden scheme
- Leading after-school football training at two schools and organising inter-school tournaments
- Anti-bullying, drugs and crime sessions in schools
- Being a reporting point for residents and providing information about community events and initiatives.



Regeneration case study

Northmoor

We're in it together

Residents have been leading lights in the regeneration of the area, organising hanging baskets for their street, pitching funding bids to improve green spaces, staging clean-ups and sitting on committees. We also count the schools as partners. Headteacher at Crowcroft Primary School, Mrs Danuta Brightwell, says she "cannot praise the wardens enough" for their efforts to host rounders, football, drug awareness sessions and junior wardens' activities. She sees them as reliable, and respected and liked by children. One warden has become a school governor in his own time and the team often pop in to assemblies where they are equally as popular with staff.

Great Places' internal Northmoor Working Group has been extended to include residents, Police Community Support Officers, Ward Co-ordination, Private Sector Housing, Street Management and Groundwork Trust. A yearly action plan has been formed to make sure we carry on building on our achievements. Latest moves include a commitment to liaise with Manchester Youth Volunteering Project to arrange regular clean-ups and litter-picking with children from St Peters Secondary School.

The future

New-build homes for outright sale are now occupied and resident Evelyn Uche has seen her community garden, the Rushford Retreat, open to the community. The wardens and the community centre continue to serve the area's ever-changing, often transient, population. Northmoor is still very much a work in progress.



New-build homes at Crowcroft



Residents' planting



Stanley Grove School footballers in their sponsored kit



Northmoor Community Laundrette, featuring computer facilities



Thriving local businesses

Partners involved in Northmoor include Manchester Private Sector Housing (PSH), Stockport Road SRB, Northmoor Community Association, Manchester Police Traffic Management Unit, MCC Environment and Development, MCC Traffic and Transportation, Manchester Operational Services, Greater Manchester Ambulance Service, Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive -Strategic Planning, GMC Fire Service, Early Years and Play Division - Education Department, Great Places Housing Group, Ian Finlay Architects, Manchester Youth Service - Northmoor Youth Action, representatives of 'Streetmates' youth group, We Care tenants association, Northmoor Urban Art Project, South Manchester Community Wardens

