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Hulme: Ten years on

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HULME, TEN YEARS ON

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Executive Summary

Re-evaluating Hulme

1. It is now over ten years since Hulme City Challenge, one of the most ambitious programmes of inner city regeneration ever attempted in the UK, was launched. Since that programme ended, in 1997, sustained efforts to build upon its successes have been made by Manchester City Council and partner organisations. Now is a good time to assess whether a decade's worth of activity has helped realise the original goals of the regeneration programme and to reflect upon outstanding challenges.
2. This report attempts to do that. It presents the findings of an evaluation study undertaken by the Centre for Sustainable Urban and Regional Futures (SURF) at the University of Salford in the first half of 2002. The study, comprising a comprehensive interview programme, a thorough review of statistical sources and a series of focus groups, updates the original evaluation of City Challenge published in 1999.

What was done and how?

3. It was always intended that the regeneration programme for Hulme extended long beyond City Challenge. During the last five years a total of £24m worth of public sector regeneration moneys, drawn from three major European Commission and national government programmes, have been invested in Hulme and neighbouring Moss Side. This compares with the £35m budget for City Challenge. Hulme has also benefited from a number of additional UK area-based initiatives. An estimated total of £400m worth of public and private investment has gone into the two areas since 1997.
4. This additional funding has supported a variety of projects focusing upon local economic development (40% of the public sector funding), physical and environmental improvements (25%), enhancements in the local quality of life (25%) and community capacity building (10%). These, in turn, have generated substantial outputs in terms of new jobs, access to training, business development, community safety, land development, infrastructure improvements, community development and new commercial and social facilities.
5. Management of the regeneration effort, however, has become much more complex as (a) sources of funding, each with their own timescales, rules, regulations and delivery partnerships, have multiplied, (b) the core partners involved in City Challenge have inevitably shifted attention to other areas in need of regeneration, and (c) national government initiatives have expanded the remit of regeneration programmes to encompass a broader range of mainstream service-related areas. As a result, managerial

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arrangements in Hulme have developed in an ad-hoc way, adding to the degree of difficulty in putting together an integrated programme.

What difference did it make?

6. A great deal of progress has been made over the last five years in realising the 'end state vision' first mapped out under City Challenge. A combination of direct regeneration programme impacts and the momentum for market-led change they created have ushered in very significant improvements in terms of physical and environmental change, economic development and employment, and social conditions/quality of life.
7. *Physical/environmental change.* Figures in the main report demonstrate that the last five years have seen a dramatic diversification of the housing stock compared to the situation in 1992. New and improved housing in the area, whether rented from social landlords, owner-occupied, or privately rented, has proven very popular and is in great demand. New housing association homes remain as affordable as council homes and the price of new private homes has risen far faster than in the city as a whole. Hulme has therefore become a much more attractive area to live. Its estimated population has grown by 3.3% since 1992, compared to a 0.2% increase in the city.
8. With 64% of households still in social rented accommodation, however, Hulme remains a relatively poor area. There are also larger than expected numbers of transient households living in Hulme temporarily. Big price rises in the private housing stock have brought many more professional and managerial households to the area but have meant that local people on lower incomes must increasingly look beyond Hulme when choosing to buy a home. New private homes have been more popular with childless households than with families. These factors mean that Hulme's population is more varied and fragmented and less stable, 'normal' and committed to the area in the long term than was initially hoped for.
9. *Economic/employment change.* The comprehensive regeneration of Hulme depended upon expanding the commercial base of the area and helping local people into jobs in Hulme and elsewhere. Successes in these areas over the last five years include the development of new, popular workspaces, some major, job-creating commercial projects, the 'placement' of substantial numbers of local people into jobs in Hulme and the growing attractiveness of the area to high technology industries that value a location near to Manchester's higher education and medical complexes.
10. Against this, however, new small retailers and entertainment providers have not appeared on the expected scale, giving Hulme an 'unfinished' feel in terms of the market services and facilities that people associate with an up and coming area. Unemployment has fallen in Hulme but remains

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‘sticky’ compared to the city as a whole where unemployment has fallen faster. .

11. *Social change/quality of life.* Physical and economic regeneration, along with a better overall economic context and the delivery of a variety of social projects linked to the regeneration programme, has improved the local quality of life considerably. In particular, Hulme benefits from a concentration of public and voluntary sector facilities and services that bears comparison with any area of the city. The statistical level of deprivation in Hulme has also improved relative to other areas of Manchester.
12. Local deprivation is nonetheless still high in national terms. It is particularly marked, and high relative to other areas of Manchester, in the inter-related areas of employment, education and child poverty. The concerns of residents with the need to improve education – particularly at secondary school level - and reduce crime if they are to remain committed to staying in the area are backed up by statistical evidence which shows that Hulme compares badly with more successful areas of the city on these issues.

Envisioning future Hulmes

13. Focus group activities conducted with three sets of ‘stakeholders’ - adult residents, 10-14 year old children and ‘Hulme users’ (i.e. non-residents with a substantial investment in the area) – revealed some areas of consensus about what people wanted from a future Hulme. All wished to see more market facilities and services and a more interesting, greener and safer environment. There was no opposition from the other groups to proposals from a single group on the need to improve training, employment-related skills and business support services and to design a more obvious ‘heart’ or focal point within Hulme which could improve community interaction and integration.
14. Where the focus groups did not agree, implicitly, is on the priorities for future land-use in Hulme. Whereas adult residents were more interested in retaining sites for public uses and the development of less polluting forms of transport, the ‘users’ group favoured a combination of commercial development areas and public space and the schoolchildren wanted to see priority accorded to the development of bigger, more spacious homes and secure recreational areas. Whilst it was not a requirement of the focus group work that their future desires should be seen as feasible by Hulme ‘managers’, these areas of controversy underline the fact that future choices will necessarily serve the interests of some groups more than others.

Hulme reconsidered

15. The evidence from SURF's evaluation suggests that the original regeneration objectives for Hulme are now 80% realised. This is a credit to those who have driven the process and a cause for celebration but it offers no grounds for complacency. Rather, now is the time to take stock of what is needed to complete the job that City Challenge started and to face up to the challenges that remain.
16. That process needs to start with a re-appraisal of the original regeneration aims that reassesses their relevance in changed circumstances. It needs to involve the key public, private and voluntary sector bodies that will continue to have responsibility for shaping the future Hulme in designing a new 'end state vision' they can all sign up to and play their part in delivering.
17. The key strategic issues that need to be debated and resolved in the process of agreeing a new vision for Hulme should include (a) the extent to which the pursuit of a stable, family-friendly Hulme – as opposed to a more cosmopolitan and transient area that is more typical of successful inner cities – remains a core element of the mission and the implications for future housing developments, improved education and community safety that would be needed to realise it, (b) how to balance the competing demands of commercial and housing developments and the retention and management of open space so that the outcome supports a future vision, and (c) the options for creating a more comprehensive and integrated strategy that can improve the employability of the substantial core of local residents suffering or at risk from social exclusion.
18. Many of the outstanding challenges in Hulme no longer demand the application of special regeneration resources or the local delivery of new, Government-backed area-based programmes. What is needed now, more than anything, is clarity of future intentions and the will and capacity to finish the job that the regeneration programmes of the last decade have nearly completed.