

city challenge

...a response from the
Hulme community

Hulme Tenants Alliance
1 Otterburn Close
Hulme
Manchester M15
061 226 7840/5241

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Introduction

The Hulme Estate, Manchester, can claim statistics that put it near the top of any scale of urban neglect, whether expressed in unemployment figures, crime, healthcare, mental health needs, drugs problems, or the most obvious one, housing dilapidation.

The people who live in Hulme have been waiting for a way to alleviate these problems for quite a while now through a scheme like City Challenge, but in the meantime we have set up loads of projects and initiatives to try and tackle the problems ourselves.

The Hulme and Moss Side Community Development Trust has been established to help start up all kinds of local economic initiatives and develop a more useful working relationship with the Private Sector.

Projects focusing on social issues like mental health needs (Hulme Action Resource Project) drugs-related problems (Drugs Advice and Support in Hulme) and needs related to homeless young families and involvement in the criminal justice system have set up the Zion Community Health Centre.

Other Community projects nearby like the Family Advice Centre, Hulme Community Arts and the Hulme Sports project rely heavily on local voluntary input to improve the quality of life in Hulme.

Meanwhile on the housing side our eleven Tenants' Association, under the Hulme Tenants' Alliance, have been trying to cope with the day-to-day problems associated with living on the largest expanse of factory built deck access housing in Europe, whilst working for a more encouraging future through the Hulme Study which has involved developing good working relationships with many City Council officers, as well as the Regional Department of the Environment and, lately, the Housing Corporation, and professional consultants of the calibre of Price Waterhouse.

These organisations have all expressed a good deal of support for a potentially unique redevelopment vehicle called Hulme Community Homes which sets out to guarantee every Hulme resident the chance of an affordable, suitable place to live in the new Hulme.

We hope that a real chance to have a say in redeveloping our homes will extend to tenants setting up their own Housing Associations, and other systems of housing management and ownership.

With all these ideas for Hulme coming from Hulme people, City Challenge *could* be the most perfectly timed Inner Cities initiative in terms of picking up on our community generated ideas and making something big out of them.

To ensure this, though, we have to determine whether the bid put in to the Department of the Environment on 5 July by our local authority, Manchester City Council, reflects the real views of the real Hulme community.

There is nothing in the Government's guidelines to suggest that City Challenge cannot support ideas and initiatives coming from the community, or extend the agenda of inner city regeneration to place Social and Environmental issues alongside Housing and Economic Improvements, or guarantee that a community like ours that was broken apart in the 1960s can make it to the other side of this next redevelopment in one piece.

As long as Manchester City Council is prepared to listen to Hulme's residents, work with us and democratically represent our views as suggested in this document, then people in Hulme can't lose.

- There is also the preference for members of the team to have their own specialist skills and abilities, rather than expecting each worker to have some kind of generic skills range.
- A need is felt to liaise with the Health Authority on this, as well as later, social proposals.

SOCIAL FIRM

This proposal is to establish a large, open, relaxed café, combining therapeutic benefits with market benefits and, of course, would provide Hulme with a much needed general social focus for Hulme, and possibly also passing clientele from the nearby student community.

This is being worked up into a more detailed plan between the HARP project, Fosdyke's Community Shops, and Social Firm.

This would require an initial subsidy but, in line with ideas about "Management for Change," there can be little doubt that it would certainly provide a much needed community focus during the upheaval of the Redevelopment process.

The vacant premises of the old Romany City building on Boundary Lane has been suggested as an ideal, available site for this project.

SECURITY REVENUE FUNDING

This would involve a lump sum from the City Challenge money being earmarked, over the five years, to guarantee funding to existing projects in Hulme who currently spend a distractingly large amount of their time each year trying to get a further 12 months refunding through schemes such as Urban Programme which, to meet Hulme's needs particularly during the Redevelopment, will need some tailoring.

Just some examples of groups in need of this financial stability guarantee are:

HARP - mental health project
DASH - drugs advice and support service
Family Advice Centre
Hulme Community Arts
Hulme Sports Project
Hulme Girls' Project
Aquarius Community Centre
 ...and others.

A guarantee like this would help to stabilise and maintain reliable and efficient community facilities building on the existing infrastructure of community groups in the area. It would take the form of a strengthened Urban Programme idea.

Some of the reasons why Hulme projects in particular should need this increased level of stability are:

- * to strengthen the backbone of a community under considerable stress from such a major upheaval as complete redevelopment
- * City Challenge money will lighten the burden on the City Council, preventing Hulme's intense needs detracting from resources to fund projects elsewhere in the City.

PREMISES

This proposes the guaranteed provision of community/social centres throughout Redevelopment proposals.

It focuses on these main aspects:

- Improvement to existing centres. There is clearly an opportunity to expand/improve the facilities in the Zion Community Health and Resource Centre (not least by providing disabled access; also maybe a linked, outdoor, "garden" area.
- More generally there should also be a principle that alternative community/social centres are written into each area's redevelopment plans, especially where existing facilities are down for demolition.
- Other essential elements of each area's redevelopment should be *planned* open spaces which would include equipped play areas, and areas of grass where children *can* play ball games, etc.
- Another need is for premises for much needed doctors' surgeries, which could be more imaginative than Hulme's current provision. (Longsight's group practice could stand as a potential example. Other elements such as employing local reception staff could easily be incorporated.)

Social Issues Management

As far as managing the money goes a special budget of extra money necessitates a special forum to manage that money.

It is proposed that a Hulme Social Forum, certainly containing representatives of Hulme's Community and Social groups, could be established to:

- administer the Social needs element of the City Challenge budget
- influence the work of the Support Workers Team
- establish the Social Firm café, with its own management

Some of these tasks may be appropriately carried out by a sub-group of the HARP project.

It may also be relevant to strengthen the Management of the Zion Centre for the purpose of taking responsibility for some of the tasks, as the Zion Centre will probably be thought an appropriate base in which to incorporate these initiatives.