# *The City Conversation*

Building Place Based Partnerships for Inclusive Growth in Liverpool

**Project Report**

# CONTENTS

# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In October 2019, a partnership of the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place at the University of Liverpool, Liverpool City Council and the MyClubmoor Partnership Board successfully bid for funding through UKRI's enhancing place-based partnerships in public engagement programme.

1.2 The project focused on the Clubmoor ward, a neighbourhood in north Liverpool that has experienced long-term deprivation despite successive regeneration initiatives, over the last 30 years. Clubmoor was selected to develop approaches to community engagement that would lead to a better understanding of local issues and contribute to the design of more effective public services.

1.3 Engagement of the community sought to enhance existing structures, building on the City Council's asset-based approach to people power: transforming deprived communities by recognising and utilising the strengths of individuals, families and communities rather than focusing on problems.[1] Through the engagement of local residents, the City Conversation aimed to gather information and reflections on the experiences of living in Clubmoor, with the project positioning residents as experts able to contribute to and co-produce the design of public services.

1.4 The City Conversation project was developed in a context of public service austerity, with Liverpool City Council managing a 63% cut in its budget since 2010.[2] The loss of resources occurred at a time where Liverpool has experienced a growing demand for services, due to increasingly complex social challenges.[3] With additional resources unavailable, the City Council, alongside public and community partners, has been driven to fundamentally rethink the configuration and delivery arrangements for public services. Central to the response has been challenging the institutional silos of public services, to draw upon the knowledge and latent capacity of communities: developing a partnership-led rather than paternalistic approach to addressing long-term issues of deprivation.

1.5 Delivery of the City Conversation project built upon a history of locality working by the City Council and the existing activity of MyClubmoor (a resident-led partnership funded by the Big Local National Lottery programme), with management and technical support provided by the University of Liverpool's Heseltine Institute. Key components of the project included:

- establishment of a partnership group to direct and deliver the project;
- development of an engagement and research approach co-produced by partners, with community-leadership at the core;
- recruitment and training of 20 Clubmoor residents as community researchers;
- data gathering through community-led surveys, interviews, focus groups and story maps; and
- a commitment by the City Council to incorporate research findings into policy and service design.

1.6 In practice the planned delivery arrangements were fundamentally disrupted by the Covid-19 outbreak. This placed significant limitations on physical movement and social interaction within the community, as directed by Government, as well as additional pressure on public agencies and on community-based groups to expand and adapt services to support vulnerable residents during the crisis. As detailed in this report, the effects of Covid-19 forced repeated restructuring of the City Conversation project that curtailed or delayed some activities, but also served to strengthen collaboration between the community, the University and the City Council.

1.7 The report is structured first with a brief outline of the socio-economic context of Clubmoor and how the project has been located within the public policy context of Liverpool. The report then proceeds to review the delivery arrangements and how these were adapted to respond to Covid-19. The report then focuses on three key aspects of delivery: partner and community engagement processes; the outcomes of community research activity; and the initial impacts on public policy. It concludes with key lessons for Liverpool partners and the national research network.

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1   Liverpool City Council (2020) City Plan. Available: City Plan (cityplanliverpool.co.uk)
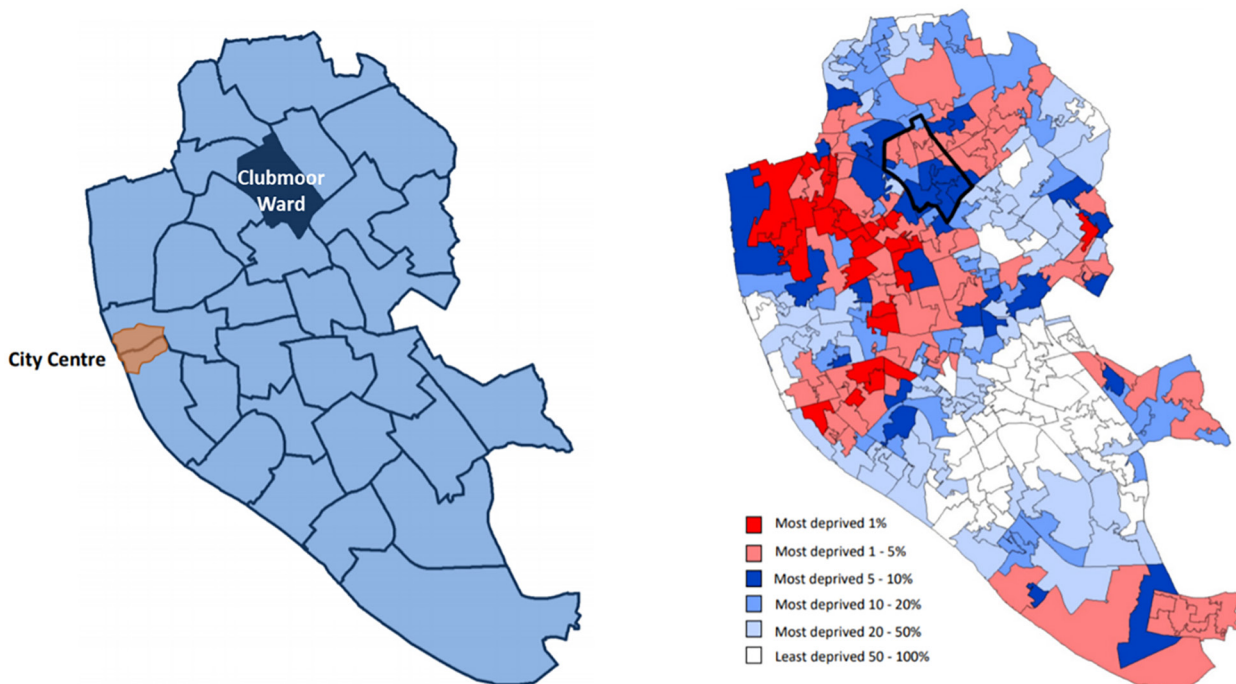2   As stated in the project application
3   Ibid

# 2. LOCAL CONTEXT

2.1 Clubmoor is a ward in the City of Liverpool with a population of around 15,000 people,[4] located north of the City Centre. It is a neighbourhood with high levels of deprivation, some 85% of the area falls within the lowest 10% on the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (figure 1). Clubmoor is distinctive in Liverpool, with household income around three quarters of the City average; 34.1% of children living in poverty compared to 27.7% across Liverpool; and 41.2% of the working age population with no qualifications, compared to 28.7% for the City.

2.2 The residents of Clubmoor are predominantly White British at 96.6% of the population, some 10 percentage points higher than the average for Liverpool. Residents also are comparatively younger than the average, with more children (aged 0 – 15 years) and fewer people over the age of 65 years. Across a range

of characteristics, including the proportion of lone parents, educational attendance and attainment, and health outcomes, residents of Clubmoor are below the average for the City of Liverpool.

2.3 These characteristics are also reflected in the socio-economic analysis of the Clubmoor population. As shown in figure 2, the vast majority of residents within the Clubmoor Ward (98.1%) fall within population categories of 'financially stretched' and facing 'urban adversity'. These categories represent households that have lower than average incomes, live in owner occupied and social rented low rise and terraced housing, and are of working age. Within Clubmoor, the dominant group is 'striving families' that constitute 46.6% of the population, compared to just 9.5% across Liverpool. This group is traditionally working class, may struggle to meet the rising costs of urban life,

**Figure 1**

## Location and Deprivation Level of Clubmoor Ward in Liverpool



Most deprived 1%
Most deprived 1 - 5%
Most deprived 5 - 10%
Most deprived 10 - 20%
Most deprived 20 - 50%
Least deprived 50 - 100%

4   All data from Liverpool City Council (2018) Ward Profiles. Available: https://liverpool.gov.uk/media/9947/clubmoor.pdf

**Figure 2**

# Socio-economic Characteristics of Clubmoor and Liverpool Population, 2020



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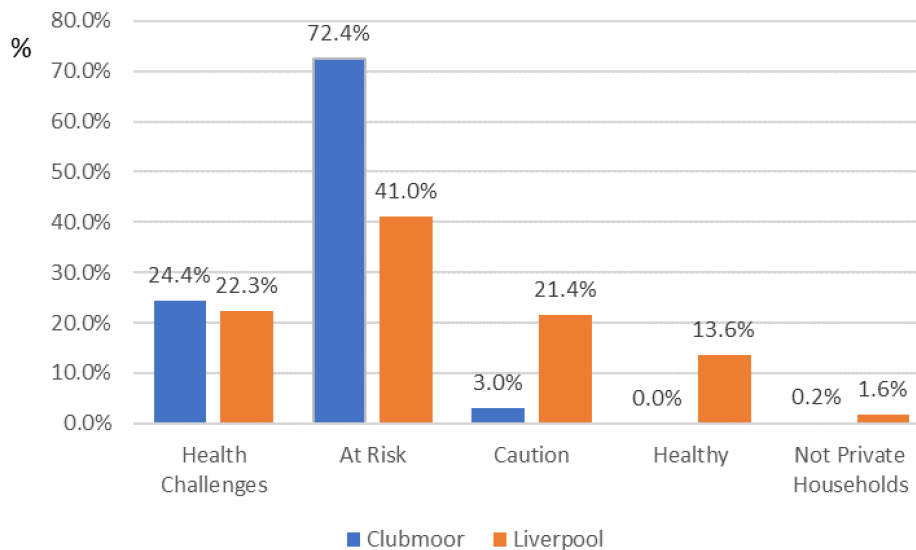
**Source:** Acorn Population Report, CACI Limited, 2020

and is vulnerable to unemployment and changing qualification requirements within the labour market.

2.4 A key feature of the population analysis is the concentration of particular socio-economic characteristics in Clubmoor, compared to Liverpool. With 98.1% in financially vulnerable groups, Clubmoor contrasts with the average for Liverpool, where around one third (32.4%) of populations form part of more affluent groups. In Clubmoor just 1.7% of households are part of these higher income categories, albeit restricted to professions that form part of the 'comfortable communities' group. While the concentration increases the socio-economic homogeneity of the population in Clubmoor, it also means that residents of the Ward are equally vulnerable to economic shocks.

2.5 The underlying income and deprivation conditions in Clubmoor are also reflected in the health and wellbeing characteristics of the area. As shown in figure 3, compared to the average for Liverpool, Clubmoor residents have poorer health indicators due to smoking, poor diet, respiratory risks and mental health conditions.

2.6 Compared to averages for Liverpool, households in Clubmoor are more likely to experience challenges in changing embedded patterns of behaviour to improve lifetime health outcomes. More precarious employment and lower income levels may limit the options available to families, creating cross-generational risks to health and life expectancy.

2.7 As seen across the UK, the health and economic impacts of Covid-19 have been most significant among already deprived communities, exacerbating existing inequalities. During the pandemic, a significant evidence base has accumulated[5] showing that people with chronic health conditions; in low paid and insecure jobs; and in poor quality or overcrowded housing have been disproportionately affected with higher mortality rates and impacts on household income. Covid-19 has clearly demonstrated social and labour market divisions and underlined the fundamental costs of poverty on the health and wellbeing of communities.

2.8 A further population characteristic of the Clubmoor community, and one that has become increasingly important during the Covid-19 pandemic, is access to and use of the internet. Analysis of internet use[6]

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5   A number of key studies have been produced including: Resolution Foundation - Young workers in the Coronavirus Crisis; PHE - Understanding the Impact of Covid-19 on BAME groups; Heseltine Institute Policy Briefing; and  IFS - Deaton Review.
6   Alexiou, A. and Singleton, A. (2018) The 2018 Internet User Classification. ESRC Consumer Data Research Centre

**Figure 3**

## Wellbeing Characteristics of Clubmoor and Liverpool Population, 2020

**Source:** Acorn Population Report, CACI Limited, 2020

indicates a low level of online engagement, as shown in figure 4, with the majority of Clubmoor categorised as 'e-withdrawn': in other words individuals are likely to either lack access to the internet, or where they have access, not to use it.

2.9 Individuals within the 'e-withdrawn' group and 'passive and uncommitted users' group make limited use of the internet for purchasing and sourcing information for hobbies and interests. Where individuals are making use of the internet, the primary means of access is through mobile devices. While there is some variation across age groups and for particular behaviours (such as use of social media), the data indicates comparatively lower levels of use of the internet in Clubmoor. This characteristic was significant as the City Conversation attempted to move from in-person research methods to on-line contact during the pandemic. This factor provides important explanatory context for the levels of on-line engagement achieved by the project.
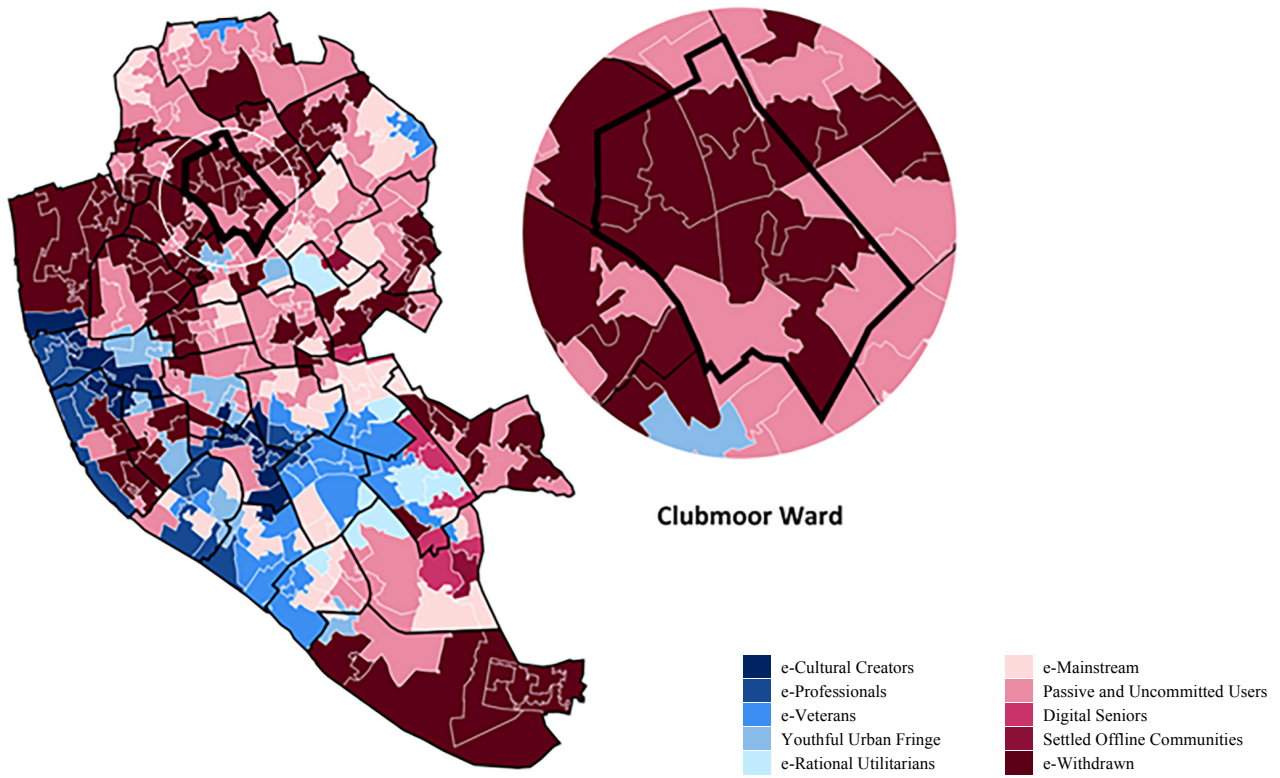
2.10 While socio-economic indicators highlight the effects of poverty on wellbeing and suggest more challenging conditions for residents of Clubmoor, there is a strong and stable community, with an active volunteering culture among some households. The community was awarded funding from the Big Local Trust in 2014, to deliver a ten-year programme to improve the lives of local residents and the living environment of Clubmoor.

Activities are focused on realising the full potential of the talent and capacity already present within the community: to use the skills available; to facilitate joint decision making; and to create structures of reciprocal support. Establishing and strengthening networks across the community and with public agencies creates potential to experiment and inform the design of more effective public services.

2.11 The public policy context for this project is provided by Liverpool's City Plan. The City Plan, launched in 2020, is a commitment from key public, private and voluntary sector partners to tackle inequalities to give everyone a better quality of life. The Plan provides a partnership and delivery framework to address the long-standing challenges of poverty and exclusion affecting many communities in Liverpool and focuses on using shared resources to shape a new place-based approach. The City Plan recognises both the complexity of problems experienced by residents and the necessity of devising a radical approach to co-produce future public services. At the centre of the policy is a commitment to collaboration with residents; creating structures for collective action able to utilise assets and capacity at all levels. At the heart of this vision is empowering people to take control of their own lives and giving people the tools to do this to build a thriving, sustainable, fair city for everyone.

**Figure 4**

Internet User Classification, Liverpool and Clubmoor Population, 2018



**Clubmoor Ward**

| | |
|---|---|
| ■ e-Cultural Creators | ■ e-Mainstream |
| ■ e-Professionals | ■ Passive and Uncommitted Users |
| ■ e-Veterans | ■ Digital Seniors |
| ■ Youthful Urban Fringe | ■ Settled Offline Communities |
| ■ e-Rational Utilitarians | ■ e-Withdrawn |

**Source:** Internet User Classification, Alexiou and Singleton, 2018

# 3. DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

**3.1     Original Project Design**

3.1.1    The City Conversation delivery arrangements were designed to create a process of engaging residents of Clubmoor in a conversation about their community to inform public service provision, while also strengthening collaboration and trust among partners. The methods of engagement, research tools and forms of analysis were to be co-created by public agencies and the community, building on the networks and existing organisational capacity of MyClubmoor. Collectively, developing and implementing a process for delivering the project was an important outcome.

3.1.2    As the project was undertaking research with local residents, an application for ethical approval was submitted to the University of Liverpool. Approval was granted on 21 January 2020.

3.1.3    The project delivery framework, as set out in figure 5, was structured over three primary stages:

- project set-up – establishing the collaborative management structures for delivery and engaging 20 residents to undertake training as community researchers;
- data collection – through a linked programme of postcard surveys, individual interviews and focus groups, all led by the community researchers; and
- analysis and policy recommendations – participatory analysis involving both community members and practitioner organisations (public bodies and NGOs working in Clubmoor) to review and devise a series of recommendations based on the collected evidence.

3.1.4    At each stage the partnership activity was to be assessed, with key learning points identified and fed into the partnership team and then collated to inform the final report. A delivery timetable was agreed with the partners, as summarised in table 1.

**Figure 5**
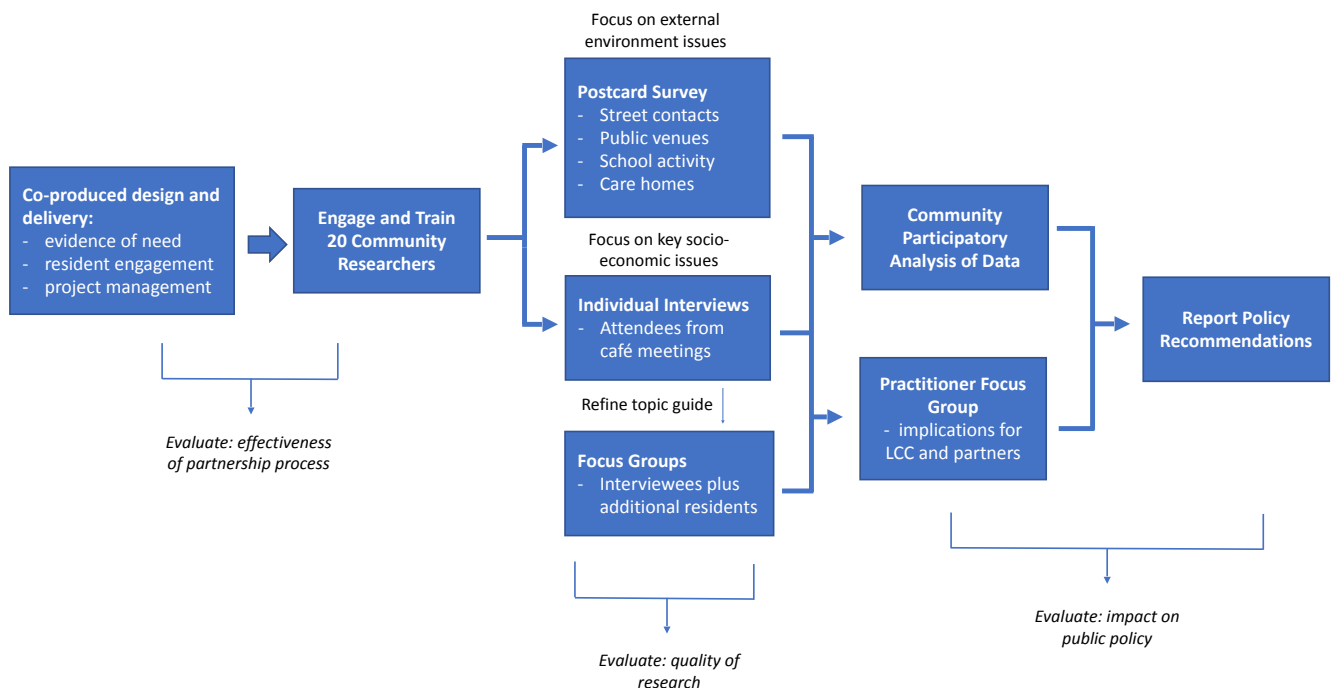
## Delivery Framework – Pre Covid-19

**Table 1**

# Outline Delivery Timetable

| Stage | Key Activity | Timeline 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| **Project set-up** | Project inception – agree project delivery arrangements with partners. | January / February |
| | Training of community researchers – target of 20 community members. | Late February / early March |
| **Data collection** | Postcard survey – undertaken by community researchers in key locations. | March / April |
| | Interviews – undertaken by community researchers in a neighbourhood venue. | Early April |
| | Focus groups – discussions with residents and stakeholders. | Late April / May |
| **Analysis and policy recommendations** | Workshops with residents (MyClubmoor Board) and public / third sector organisations. | May |
| | Policy report – identify key outcomes from research and policy recommendations for City Council. | June |

## 3.2 Impact of Covid-19

3.2.1 The initial project set up stage and the training of community researchers was completed prior to the lockdown, however Covid-19 fundamentally affected the subsequent stages of the project. The participatory character of the project, particularly the roles of community researchers, was severely curtailed by the lockdown and requirement for social distancing.

3.2.2 While the lockdown created a number of serious challenges for the project, partners agreed to identify ways in which the City Conversation could be restructured or adapted to retain the core principles of participation, while working within public health restrictions. It is notable that there was a strong commitment to continuing with the project by all partners and evidence of significant input of ideas on how to adjust the method. There was also an acceptance to try untested approaches and to refine the method as the project progressed.

3.2.3 The delivery framework, as shown in figure 5, was adapted to take account of the Covid-19 restrictions. The green sections of the diagram (figure 6) highlight the elements of the project that were changed to allow for social distancing rules. The primary approach was to shift from an 'in-person' contact model to on-line virtual engagement with residents (see table 2).

3.2.4 As part of the revisions to the method, an additional data gathering activity (story mapping) was added. This additional approach was used to increase the use of audio-visual material, via MyClubmoor, to supplement interview data and provide legacy material for the project. Further detail is included in section five, however the plan was to encourage photography, video making and commentary by residents on aspects of Clubmoor that they liked or would like to change.

**Table 2**

# Adaptation of Research Method in Response to Covid-19

| Activity | From ... | To ... |
|---|---|---|
| Postcard Survey | Printed copies distributed at community venues and completed by hand. | On-line survey (Survey Monkey) distributed by social networks and email links. |
| Interviews | Face to face interviews in a community venue. | Telephone interviews. |
| Focus groups | Meetings held in a community venue. | On-line discussions held using Microsoft Teams. |

**Figure 6**

# Delivery Framework – Covid-19 Adaptions*

Focus on external
environment issues

**Co-produced design and
delivery:**
- evidence of need
- resident engagement
- project management

**Engage and Train
20 Community
Researchers**

**Contact community
through social
media**

**Online survey**
- Survey Monkey via
direct email and
social media

Focus on key socio-
economic issues

**Telephone Interviews**
- Selected from
survey responses
- Representative
sample of residents

**Digital Engagement**
- Insights into life in
Clubmoor

**Community Review**
- MyClubmoor
Board

**Practitioner Focus
Group**
- implications for
LCC and partners

**Report Policy
Recommendations**
- Written report

*Evaluate: effectiveness
of partnership process*

*Evaluate: quality of
research*

*Evaluate: impact on
public policy*

*\* Green boxes indicate changes in methods*

3.2.5    The adapted delivery arrangements required tailoring
and improvement as they were deployed. The project
has been unable to achieve some of its targets due
to changes in its scope and scale, but the outcomes
that were achieved have provided insights into the
Clubmoor community and the process of adapting
and delivering the project in uncertain conditions
has strengthened partnership working between the
community, Council and University.

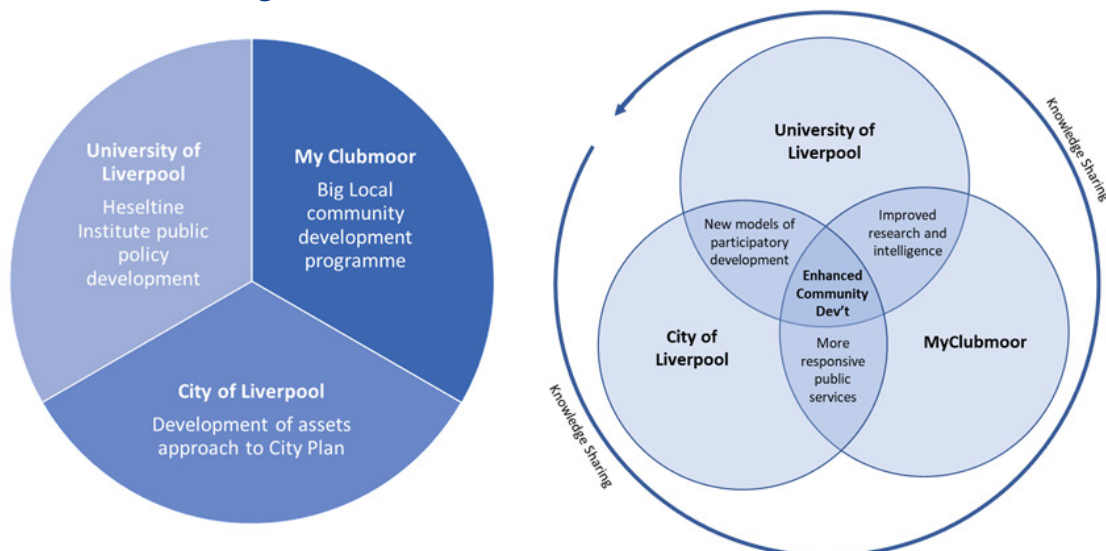# 4. PARTNER AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES

## 4.1 Establishing the Project

4.1.1 The initial stages of the project focused on strengthening partner relationships and establishing structures to facilitate collaborative management of the project. In addition to being a necessary requirement of delivery, the process of establishing the project was intended to contribute to improved dialogue and knowledge sharing between the University, community and City Council.

4.1.2 An important strength of the project was that partners had a common goal of realising sustainable community development in the Clubmoor area. As illustrated in figure 7, the partners had an established stake in the development of enhanced public engagement and could identify areas of specific additional benefit of working together.

4.1.3 The partners also identified aspects of the existing relationships and processes of policy development that could be significantly improved through better collective working. For the City Council, the project directly contributed to extending 'the conversation' with communities and delivery of the City Plan; for the University the project provided a means to enhance civic and community engagement and contribute to participatory development in deprived communities; and for MyClubmoor it provided a new avenue to engage the University and City Council and influence community research to inform its own planning and activity.

4.1.4 Recognising the overlapping interests and enabling each partner to identify specific benefits that furthered their own objectives, was key to maintaining collective support for the project. Dialogue was managed and refreshed through the steering group that met (in person and then virtually) every 2 – 3 weeks during the project. This allowed partners to keep in contact and collectively direct the delivery of the project.

4.1.5 Membership of the steering group comprised representatives from MyClubmoor, Liverpool City Council, the University of Liverpool and Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services (LCVS), with the University convening and chairing the meetings. This group appears to have been highly effective, both from a practical perspective of designing and directing the delivery of the project, particularly through the turbulence of the Covid-19 lockdown, and also as a way to strengthen communication flow and the relationships between partners.
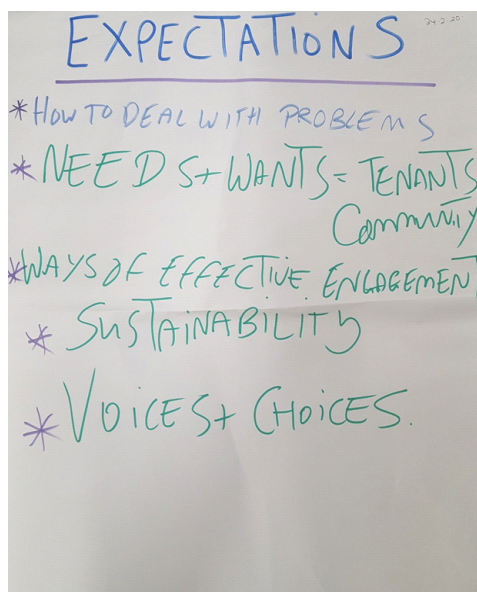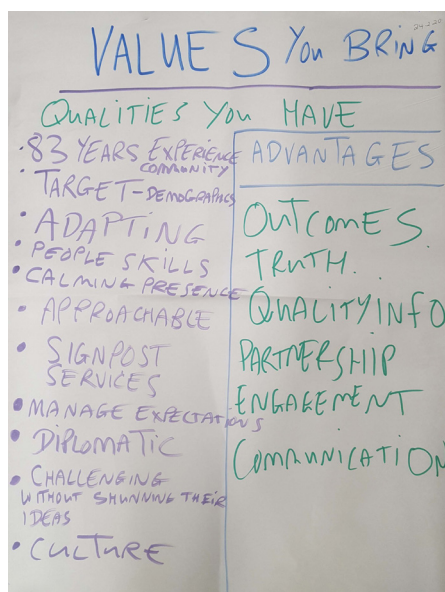
**Figure 7**

## Stakeholder Intersecting Interests

4.1.6    From the outset, the steering group provided an effective means of sharing information, tasking partners, problem solving and tracking the delivery of the project. A review of the meeting minutes suggests a strong collaborative approach, with the group creating a platform for consensus building. This naturally adapted to the changed conditions after March 2020, to focus on adapting delivery arrangements to respond to the pandemic.

4.1.7    The open and mutually supportive character of the meetings reflects the work done outside of the steering group meetings, but also the commitment shown by partners to continue the project through the Covid-19 crisis. Interviews with stakeholders underlined how there was mutual respect for different partner experiences and points of view. Some interviewees also suggested that conducting meetings through MS Teams helped create a more equal platform for inputs, perhaps more so than if meetings were held in University or City Council venues.

4.1.8    Initial feedback from partners suggests that there have been positive outcomes from the partnership working that have closed perceived gaps in dialogue. There has been an active process of co-design and production of the City Conversation project through the partnership that has generated benefits for all stakeholders. Given the scale of need, as well as the potential impacts of Covid-19 on the social and economic wellbeing of Clubmoor residents, it is anticipated that the experience of joint working and planning will lead to ongoing collaboration.

## 4.2.    Training Workshops

4.2.1    Engagement and training of local residents as community researchers was the first substantive goal of the project partners. The intention was to engage and upskill local residents to undertake primary research for the project – the postcard survey and the one-to-one interviews. In line with existing good practice in participatory research, involvement of local residents aimed to ground the research practice in the life of the community; generating benefits of improved access through familiar networks and local insights into the research findings.

4.2.2    Recruitment for the researcher training was undertaken through MyClubmoor networks with four workshop training sessions being run on 24 and 27 February and 10 and 13 March 2020. In total there were 23 people attending the training workshops. Participants were connected to Clubmoor through being local residents, members of community organisations or public service groups. Of those attending, the majority (73%) were female. Groups represented in the training included Merseyside Police, Torus Housing Association, St Andrews Community Centre, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool John Moores University, the Bridge Centre, MyClubmoor and local residents.

4.2.3    The workshops provided an introduction to the City Conversation project and basic instruction in the practice of qualitative research. The scope of the training was limited to the specific activities of the project and sought to ensure that the community researchers were fully informed about their roles, had

**Figure 8**

# Workshop Training Sheets

clear guidance on how to engage local residents and gather data, and were safe. The key elements of the workshop sessions were:

- expectations of becoming a researcher – outline of the role and specific research tasks and how data will be collected and used;
- researcher skills / the value residents bring – identifying existing capabilities needed for community research;
- research techniques – as relevant to the research tasks;
- ethics and confidentiality – reducing risks for researchers and participants;
- dealing with dilemmas – managing difficult situations; and
- interview practice – role play and exploring the practice of a researcher.

4.2.4  From the 18 completed evaluation forms collected after the workshops, there was a high level of satisfaction among participants. All of the attendees completing forms provided positive feedback overall on the quality of the sessions, with a majority (95%) reporting satisfaction of their understanding of the project, use of research techniques and their ability to perform as community researchers – a summary of responses is shown in appendix 1.

4.2.5  Based on comments in the evaluation sheets, the sessions appeared to generate real interest and enthusiasm among the community researchers to begin the project. Unfortunately, the last training session (13 March 2020) was just ten days before the Covid-19 lockdown was announced. This posed an ongoing dilemma for the partners, with the community researchers ready to go, but the lockdown restrictions preventing interaction and public engagement.

4.2.6  The minutes of the steering group show regular discussions about how best to communicate with and maintain engagement with the community researchers as the project was adapted. Two emails were sent to the community researchers to provide updates, highlighting that the project was continuing, but the changes meant a much more limited role for community researchers.

4.2.7  As the postcard survey was taken on-line (see section 5) this main opportunity for wider resident engagement was significantly curtailed. With the initial one-to-one interviews adapted to be telephone interviews, some of the community researchers were interviewed, but there was limited scope to include the community researchers undertaking the telephone interviews due to logistical difficulties of managing confidentiality, quality and costs.

4.2.8  Through discussion the steering group agreed, in the context of ongoing uncertainty over public health conditions, to progress with data collection primarily through the partners. The aim was to bring in the community researchers into the interview and focus group stages of the project, should social distancing arrangements allow.

4.2.9  Feedback from the stakeholders underlines that the inability to fully involve community researchers in the data collection, as originally planned, was a great disappointment. Given the success of the training workshops, the enthusiasm of participants and the potential to have a participatory approach that drew upon the people assets within the community, the loss of this element of the delivery method was a major shortfall.

**Figure 9**

# Workshop Training Participants

# 5. COMMUNITY RESEARCH

**5.1.    Community Survey**

5.1.1    A central component of the community engagement activity was intended to be the collection of data on perceptions of Clubmoor from local residents. A short survey using postcard questionnaires was designed and printed to be distributed by the community researchers in key locations across the ward. The partners aimed to generate a response of around 1,000 completed questionnaires through:

- street engagement of residents in key locations such as schools, supermarkets and churches;
- distribution of postcards and 'letter-box' drops in community venues;
- household distribution of cards; and
- distribution via community groups and networks linked to MyClubmoor.

5.1.2    The postcard questionnaires were designed to provide a baseline of information on the key attributes and challenges of the area. Questions were simple and required short responses of a few words on the best thing about Clubmoor, the features of the area they would like to change, and to identify the potential contributions by the community to make the area a better place to live.
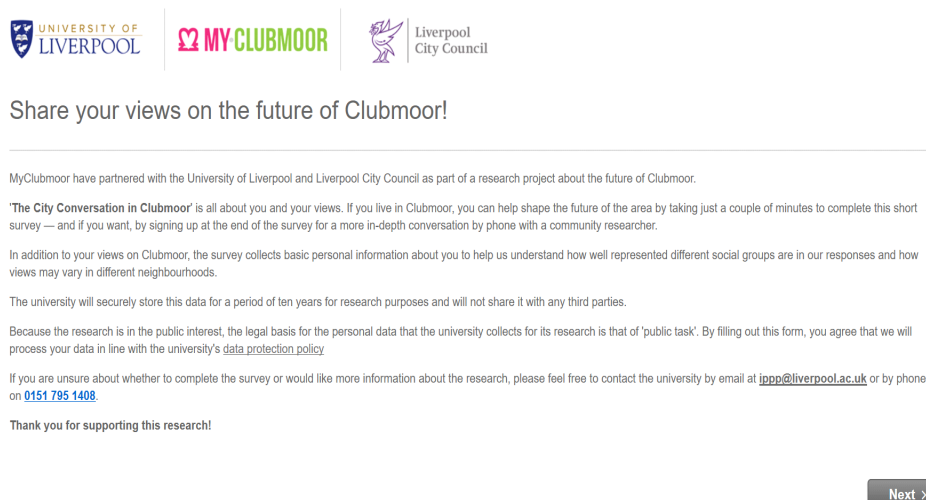
5.1.3    Unfortunately, soon after the postcards were printed for distribution, the Covid-19 lockdown was announced, making it impossible for the community researchers to carry out the planned survey. In response, the partners identified a range of alternative means of gathering information on resident views of the Clubmoor neighbourhood. The result was agreement to convert the postcard format into a Survey Monkey questionnaire, to be distributed through social networks and completed on-line (figure 10).

5.1.4    A link to the survey was embedded in an email and circulated by MyClubmoor to its list of partner organisations working in the local community, on its Facebook page and through the networks and projects of MyClubmoor board members. The survey link was also distributed through the University of Liverpool's and Liverpool City Council's social media channels and to the community researchers.

5.1.5    The hope was that the email would snowball through various networks and social media connections to generate a significant response equal to that planned in the original method. The survey was launched (via emails and social media) on 1 April 2020, with a plan to review responses on a weekly basis and close the survey on 30 April 2020. Assessing response

**Figure 10**

## On-line 'Postcard' Survey



Share your views on the future of Clubmoor!

MyClubmoor have partnered with the University of Liverpool and Liverpool City Council as part of a research project about the future of Clubmoor.

'**The City Conversation in Clubmoor**' is all about you and your views. If you live in Clubmoor, you can help shape the future of the area by taking just a couple of minutes to complete this short survey — and if you want, by signing up at the end of the survey for a more in-depth conversation by phone with a community researcher.

In addition to your views on Clubmoor, the survey collects basic personal information about you to help us understand how well represented different social groups are in our responses and how views may vary in different neighbourhoods.

The university will securely store this data for a period of ten years for research purposes and will not share it with any third parties.

Because the research is in the public interest, the legal basis for the personal data that the university collects for its research is that of 'public task'. By filling out this form, you agree that we will process your data in line with the university's data protection policy

If you are unsure about whether to complete the survey or would like more information about the research, please feel free to contact the university by email at **ippp@liverpool.ac.uk** or by phone on **0151 795 1408**.

**Thank you for supporting this research!**

Next ›

levels weekly allowed the partners to check the representativeness of the replies being returned and to target sections of the community not engaging.

5.1.6  The first report on responses, compiled two weeks after the launch of the survey (on 15 April 2020), showed that there had been a total of 37 responses, 32 of which were from residents within the Clubmoor ward. The response was much lower than anticipated. The responses were discussed by the project steering group on 16 April 2020 where additional engagement activities were identified to encourage a greater take up and response to the survey. These included:
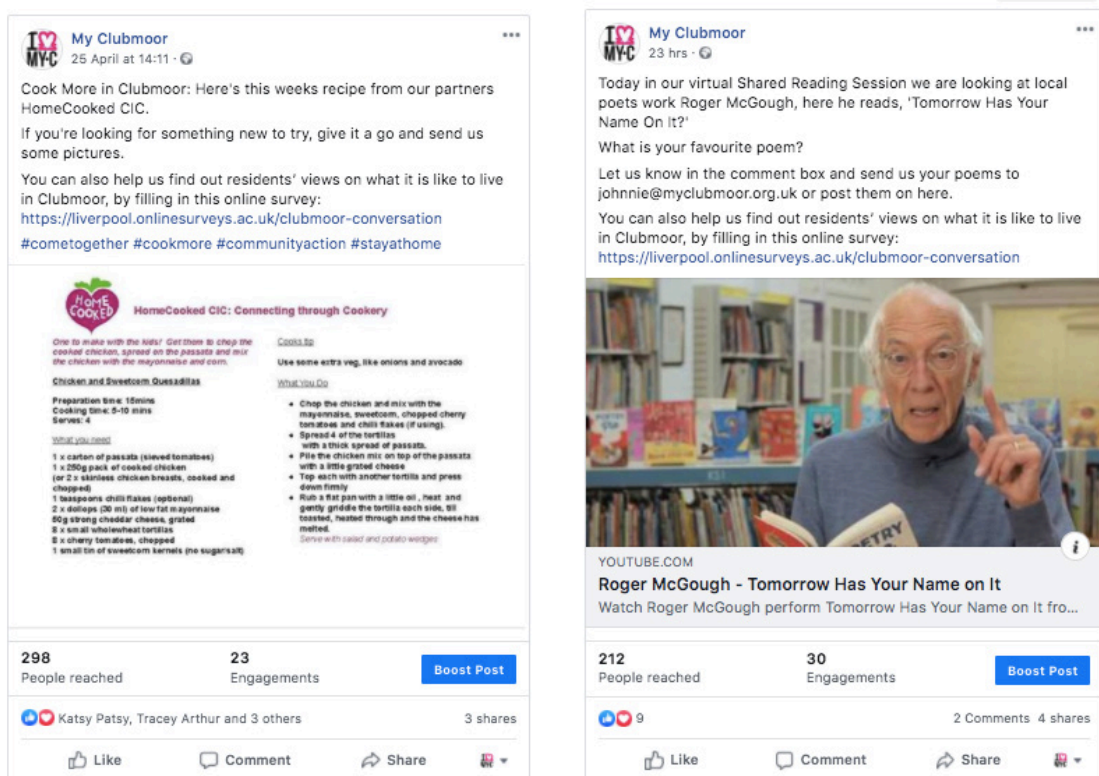
- a further round of emailing and circulation of the link to encourage completion of the survey;
- promoting the survey through MyClubmoor groups including the photography group, allotments group, older residents contact calls and residents' groups – a link was included in Facebook posts (figure 11);
- speaking to LVCS partners and encouraging them to promote the survey through their members; and
- use of the City Council volunteers register – people who had volunteered as community helpers for Covid-19 response.

5.1.7  The discussion also considered additional options to 'piggy-back' on other activities and use creative means to express a view about the Clubmoor neighbourhood. These included contacting primary schools in the areas to undertake homework tasks to draw a picture or take a photograph that represents a perspective on the community, but this would have required university ethics approval. Similarly, whether it was possible to showcase music on-line as a way to enable people to express their feelings about the place they live. These cultural / multimedia forms of input were intended to fit with the proposed story mapping (see section 5.3) as well as provide a parallel source of data to survey responses. The partners also discussed including a 'prize-draw' incentive to encourage take up, but the practicalities of running a draw were seen as a major disadvantage.

5.1.8  A further review of responses was undertaken at the steering group meeting held on 30 April 2020. The report indicated that there had been just eight additional responses (total 45). Despite distributing the survey link via a number of routes, including the MyClubmoor Facebook page that reaches around 3,400 contacts within the network (see figure 11), there had only been a marginal increase in take-up. The discussion identified the potential impact of the

**Figure 11**

# Screenshots of MyClubmoor Facebook Posts that Include the Survey Link

underlying levels of internet access and use, in light of the available analysis (see paragraph 2.8) that categorised much of the Clubmoor population as 'e-withdrawn'. Additionally a number of practical issues were identified as possible impediments to take-up:

- the extent to which all of the contacts had been effectively followed up – some additional task management was suggested;
- completing a survey was insufficiently interesting for people in Clubmoor – the topic was too generalised and the potential benefits had not been fully explained;
- whether there was some participation fatigue – particularly at a time when there was a large amount of information being put out to the public about Covid-19, making longer-term discussions seem less important; and
- the lack of an incentive to complete and return the survey had impacted on the response rate.

5.1.9   Following further discussion among the partners, it was agreed that there was limited potential to significantly increase the response rate during the lockdown. The survey responses would be assessed by the Heseltine Institute and reported back to the partners to inform the design of the interview stage. The postcard survey (questions and format) could be reused by MyClubmoor
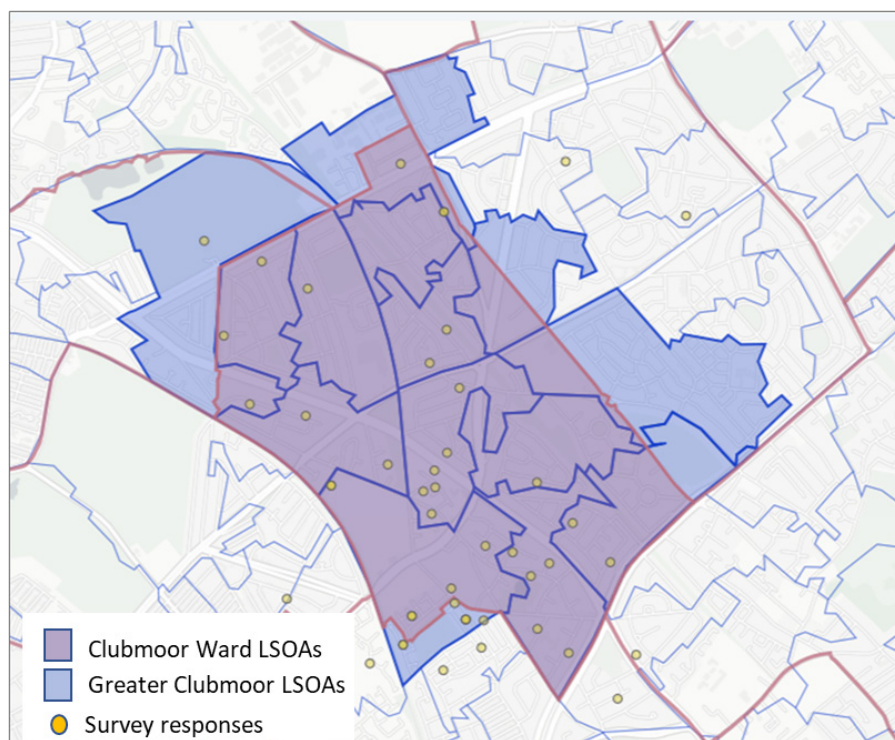
after the lockdown had ended, if it was considered useful.

5.1.10   The survey had a total of 48 responses, received over an approximately two-month period, starting on 1 April 2020. While a majority of the completed questionnaires were from residents of Clubmoor ward (60%), responses from residents of seven other neighbouring wards were also part of the data. Due to the level of total response, the relatively artificial administrative ward boundaries (compared to the social geography of lived places) and the similar levels of deprivation in neighbouring areas, the project team decided to include the non-Clubmoor responses in the data analysis. As shown in figure 12, responses came from a 'greater Clubmoor' area.

5.1.11   The spatial distribution of responses was uneven across the ward, with a large proportion of responses from the southern part of the area. As the primary means of promoting take up of the survey was through social media, there were few means to adjust the rate of response by area. It is likely that the responses were influenced by the level of pre-existing familiarity and engagement with MyClubmoor activities – with the greatest concentration of responses in the LSOA where the MyClubmoor hub is located.
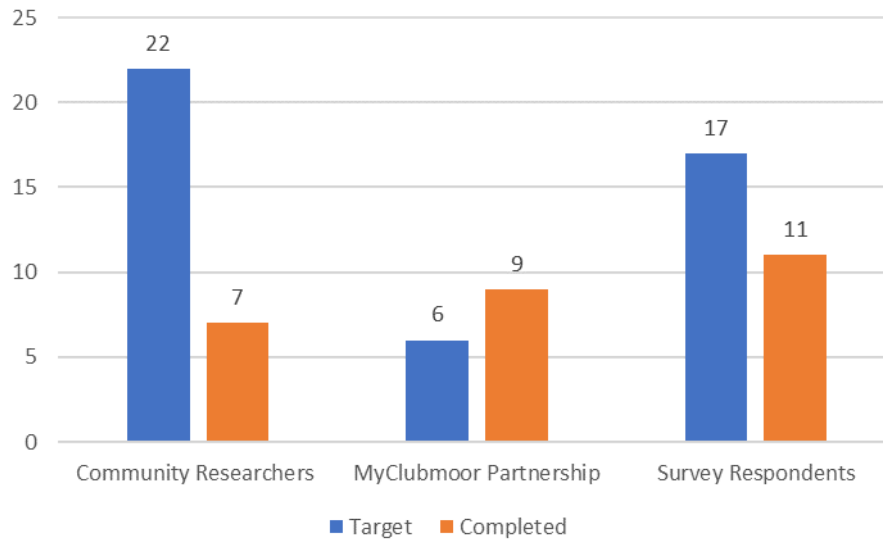
**Figure 12**

# Distribution of Survey Respondents within the Area of Interest

5.1.12 Response rates were highest among residents aged 30 – 69 years, proportionately greater than the share of the population, and low among those aged 18 – 29 and residents aged 70+. A majority of the responses were from women (67%) and all responses were from people identifying their ethnicity as White.

5.1.13 While the low response prevents any meaningful disaggregation of the data, it does raise a number of issues about the method and the effectiveness of using social media as a research engagement tool, particularly in communities where there may be limited access to or use of internet services. In particular:

- The effectiveness of piggy-backing survey links onto existing social and leisure activities – while MyClubmoor Facebook groups are well-supported, they were largely ineffective as a means to get people to complete the survey.
- While the new media approach would intuitively be attractive to young people 18 – 24-year-olds were significantly underrepresented in the response in relation to their population share. This may reflect the types of focus of the MyClubmoor membership, but significantly misses out young families.
- Overrepresentation of women respondents – while this may be a reflection of gender interests in community engagement and / or interest in local development issues. It does understate the views of men.
- Given the occupational profile of Clubmoor, with over one quarter (27.2%) of residents working in sales and personal services occupation – groups highly impacted by business closure during the lockdown – residents of working age were expected to have had more time to engage in the research.

5.1.14 Survey results provided insights into the perceptions of Clubmoor as a place to live. The main responses given to the question: 'What is the best thing about living in Clubmoor?' were firstly that people had a strong sense of community and liked their neighbours; and secondly, that respondents liked the green spaces and local parks. Additionally, there were significant mentions of the accessibility of Clubmoor and local public transport and the proximity of shops, primary schools and other amenities.

**5.2  Individual Interviews**

5.2.1 The original plan for the interviews was that they would be undertaken face-to-face by community researchers from a sample of people completing the postcard survey. The aim was to allocate each researcher three to five interviewees and for the researcher to undertake the interviews in a community 'café' setting.

5.2.2 A question frame was designed to complement the information gathered through the postcard surveys; creating an opportunity to probe in more detail the aspects of life in Clubmoor that were most valued by residents and implications for public service design. The intention was that interviews would be voice recorded and transcribed by the University of Liverpool for analysis.

5.2.3 The method was obviously not possible in the context of Covid-19 and partners agreed to vary the approach to undertake telephone interviews instead of face-to-face. A number of practical issues arose:

- community researcher training did not cover telephone interviews, meaning that researchers would be unprepared, thereby creating practical and ethical risks for the project;
- additionally, using community researchers introduced the complexity of getting recording devices bought and delivered and maintaining consistency of method;
- as the health and social context for the interviews had changed substantially since the start of the project, the question framework needed to be revised to take account of Covid-19; and
- potential interviewees were due to the drawn from the population of survey respondents; however, as there was insufficient sample from the postcards a different selection method was required.

5.2.4 Due to the uncertainty of the lockdown timing, the partners agreed to commence the interviews with two members of MyClubmoor working as the researchers. The expectation was that the project could start the interviews, and test the question framework in the process, and then hand over to the community researchers to complete the interviews at the end of the lockdown period. Due to continuing public health concerns, there was not a handover to the community researchers.

5.2.5 Support was provided to the two MyClubmoor staff and they piloted the questionnaire with each other on 2 June 2020. We reviewed the questions and the process on 3 June. This allowed for some clarifications on the use of the question frame and the process and timing of setting up interviews. A schedule was provided to the two MyClubmoor staff to contact participants and agree times to undertake the interviews – see appendix 2.

5.2.6 Interviews started on 8 June 2020, with several rounds of contact and follow up, until the end of August 2020. A list of 45 prospective interviewees were identified by partners, these included people who had been contacted or involved in the community researcher workshops, members of MyClubmoor partnership and respondents to the online survey that had indicated a willingness to be contacted for interview – see figure 13.

**Figure 13**

## Telephone Interview Breakdown



5.2.7 From the target group of 45, a total of 27 telephone interviews were completed. Achieving this number of interviews took considerable effort by the interviewers to set up and complete the sessions. In common with the survey responses, a majority of interview participants were female (65%) with an average age of 49 years. Half of the interview participants were aged 45+ and all participants that provided details said that their ethnicity was White British.

5.2.8 To boost the number of interviewees and to try to address the low number of young people participating in the on-line survey, additional contacts were included to request telephone interviews. These included parent and toddler groups and other community-based organisations. These routes failed to generate further volunteers for interview.

5.2.9 Feedback from the interviewers showed that while email, SMS and voicemail were used to follow up prospective interviewees, the success rate was much lower than anticipated – particularly among community researchers. Similar to the experience with the on-line survey, there was some indication of fatigue and of competing pressures on people's time. As a directed rather than 'cold-call' approach was taken, there was limited scope to generate the volumes of contacts needed to achieve significant numbers of interview participants. In the absence of Covid-19, the postcard survey should have generated the volumes needed.

5.2.10 The 27 completed interviews were voice recorded and transcribed by the University of Liverpool for analysis. While the detail is not repeated here, in order to focus on the process of undertaking the interviews, a number of core themes emerged:

- Green spaces and the strong sense of community were highlighted by residents as being the best thing about Clubmoor, whilst crime / anti-social behaviour and a lack of community provision (things to do) were often highlighted as issues for improvement.
- Residents of Clubmoor would recommend it as a place to live, but most felt that the area had not changed for better or worse in the last five years.
- Despite its wide-ranging negative effects, most felt that Covid-19 had brought out a strong community spirit that needed to be retained after the pandemic.

5.2.11 Overall the interview responses were broadly consistent with the responses provided in the on-line survey. These primarily focused on social and environmental conditions within the community, with limited self-reflection on how this affected the feelings or behaviours of the residents.

5.2.12 Responses did confirm the willingness (in abstract at least) to have a more active dialogue with public agencies (the City Council in particular), however as the City Conversation work has demonstrated, making this real and securing inputs of residents can be challenging. Participants recognised that blended approaches to engagement were likely to be the most inclusive and far-reaching. Digital tools (e.g.

**Figure 14**

# Best Things about Clubmoor, according to Residents



*"The thing that I like the most is the green space, and like I say, about the Ducky and the parks and stuff like that; that for me is the most important thing. I like being outdoors and being able to access that."*

**Interviewee**



*"I want [the pandemic] to go away, but some parts of it I'd like to keep, you know? People chatting to their neighbours, people doing a bit of shopping for people – it's no bad thing."*

**Interviewee**



*"The best thing about Clubmoor is the community, who time and time again has come together to help vulnerable people within the community"*

**On-line survey respondent**

social media) were perceived to be more effective in connecting with younger people. For older residents more traditional and face-to-face methods (e.g. postal materials, doorstep conversations and community meetings) were favoured.

**5.3    Story Mapping**

5.3.1    The steering group decided to supplement data from the survey and interviews with social media and visual inputs from residents. Using a model of story mapping as a framework allowed residents of Clubmoor to reflect on their community. The themes followed the main topics raised in the survey: open spaces and parks, neighbours, and other places where people were able to interact.

5.3.2    Four Facebook posts were published on the MyClubmoor pages between 11 and 25 of August 2020 asking people to comment or add an audio-visual response to a question focusing on the themes of open space, neighbours and places. An example of the Facebook response is shown in figure 15. A summary of the responses is shown in table 3.

5.3.3    While it provided a useful means of sharing information across the community network, there was limited response to the posts, with only the open space theme generating new additional information for the project.

**Table 3**

# Social Media Engagement

| Topic | Reach | Shares | Engagements |
|---|---|---|---|
| Open Spaces | 1,558 people | 6 | 342 |
| Promote interviews | 906 people | 6 | 100 |
| Neighbours | 1,134 people | 7 | 148 |
| Important places | 639 people | 5 | 127 |

5.3.4    The use of additional participatory techniques to generate wider engagement beyond the core MyClubmoor group is an issue for consideration for all partners involved in the project. Centrally this is understanding the intention of participation to improving communication, creating spaces for people to engage, and establishing platforms for community voice and leadership.

5.3.5    As a legacy resource from the project, MyClubmoor have produced a video that brings together visual images of the ward with wider findings from the research activity. This provides an audio-visual record of the City Conversation to supplement the written report and to provide a dissemination tool for use with funders and partner organisations.

**Figure 15**

# Facebook Post

# 6. PUBLIC POLICY IMPACT

6.1     A key aspect of the project was to engage public sector stakeholders in a review and discussion of the research findings. The aims being to both report issues raised during the fieldwork for response, but more significantly to identify how public agencies can work more effectively and collaboratively with communities.

6.2     Two online practitioner workshops were held on 17 and 18 November 2020, with 20 attendees (including two from the Heseltine Institute) from a cross section of public and social agencies working in the City (table 4). The key aims of the sessions were as follows:

- discuss what worked well in terms of engaging with residents and what the challenges were;
- identify how connections between local communities and public authorities can be strengthened to focus on what matters most to people;
- highlight the lessons from the Covid-19 outbreak in designing a future community engagement strategy; and
- draw together implications for public policy and practice.

6.3     The sessions began with a slide presentation that outlined the methods and key findings from the project, including the feedback gathered from residents of Clubmoor through the on-line survey and interviews. It provided a basis for practitioner organisations to sense check findings against their own experiences (and in many cases, their own community research) and create a shared platform for discussion of the public policy implications.

6.4     In both workshops there was a lively debate that demonstrated the wide range of existing activity and a firm commitment to increasing partnership working, both across public agencies and with communities. Headline issues relating to community engagement, cross agency working and public policy development are considered in the following sections.

**6.5     Community Engagement**

6.5.1   All of the practitioner organisations have forms of engagement and information sharing with clients as part of their core operation. During the pandemic these methods have been adapted to introduce new and

**Table 4**

## Practitioner Workshop Attendees

| Session One | | Session Two | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Divisional Manager | Liverpool City Council | Divisional Manager | Liverpool City Council |
| Programme Manager | Liverpool City Region CA | Advisor | Citizens Advice |
| Health Programme Manager | Citizens Advice Liverpool | Senior Project Manager | Liverpool City Council |
| Executive Director | Merseycare | Children's Centre  Manager | Liverpool City Council |
| Regional Director | Torus Housing | Policy Officer | Liverpool City Council |
| Area Housing Manager | Torus Housing | Police Sergeant | Merseyside Police |
| Partnerships Manager | Cobalt Housing | Police Superintendent | Merseyside Police |
| Co-ordinator | Citizens Advice Liverpool | Community Asset Development Lead | Liverpool CCG |
| | | Community Regeneration Manager | Cobalt Housing |
| | | Group Manager | Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service |

additional activity to maintain contact with residents via telephone, video platforms and social media, with a particular focus on elderly and vulnerable individuals. This has included data-sharing across agencies to identify people and households most at risk. There was a strong sense that these adaptations have been important for both agencies and communities and, where appropriate, should be protected and continued post-pandemic.

6.5.2 A number of participants noted the additional difficulties of meeting client needs where social distancing requirements were in place. The lack of direct contact makes early identification of problems and risks (i.e., in child and family welfare) harder. This may generate a backlog of problems coming to the fore after the pandemic has passed. It will be important to continue with joined-up service provision to ensure sufficient capacity of response.

6.5.3 A number of points were made during the discussions on how City Conversation engagement activity could have been better coordinated across agencies, with particular reference to boosting the numbers of Clubmoor residents responding to the surveys. The lack of systematic contact and information sharing across organisations was seen as a barrier to realising the full benefits of existing relationships and a constraint to participation in the City Conversation project.

6.5.4 It was noted that there had been an increase in neighbourly support during the pandemic and this had highlighted the benefits of working through communities to engage residents and disseminate information on sources of support. Post-pandemic this should be more fully exploited and supported by public agencies, recognising the strong risk of a return to business as usual status.

6.5.5 Opportunities to extend participatory budgeting activity, to take a more co-productive approach to service delivery and to encourage discussions, at a micro level, in neighbourhoods could provide a means to extend the civic and community involvement generated during the pandemic.

6.5.6 Public agencies need to embed change in the day-to-day activity of staff to accommodate new and increased collaborative ways of working. While public agencies may want to invite residents to become more involved in community-led service delivery and decision making, public agencies are often perceived as intimidating sources of authority by residents. Working with trusted grassroots groups is essential to create a bridge between public bodies and organisations; where local groups are seen to have shared experience with members of the community.

6.5.7 While some grassroots groups have become vital to the delivery of support during the pandemic, these groups are at risk from a lack of basic core funding and a return to business as usual after the pandemic.

6.5.8 The use of social media as a communications and engagement tool was seen as an opportunity, however the experience of the City Conversation and other organisations showed it had mixed success. The experience is that social media was effective for information sharing, but less so for generating responses where people were not otherwise engaged in an issue. The impact of the digital divide and the difficulty of tracking impact makes measuring the effectiveness of social media difficult.

## 6.6 Cross Agency Working

6.6.1 There was a discussion in both workshops about the history of neighbourhood management and working in Liverpool that, due to cuts in public budgets, had been gradually withdrawn over the years. There are some effective approaches of cross agency working from these experiences that could be revived and reinstituted. A degree of refocusing on social and wellbeing issues alongside traditional 'grime and crime' would be needed.

6.6.2 To make more than a paper commitment, organisational changes are needed to service delivery arrangements and a move towards pooled resources to embed joint working. This could include (linked to the City Plan) shared targets and measures on 'place-based leadership' that drive goals around improvements in 'hard' poverty outcomes and 'soft' measures to improve wellbeing, behaviours and perceptions of communities.

6.6.3 To improve information flow and co-ordination between public agencies a 'partnership tracker' of engagement activity could be developed. Linked to the delivery of primary City Plan goals, a tracker would improve the visibility of cross-agency activity and provide a basis for more effective planning of services.

6.6.4 Based on a collaborative assessment of need, there is potential, through joint working, to increase the total resources available to local communities. This could involve: the engagement of grassroots organisations as sources of information and capacity; the use of social prescribers to connect health patients into non-clinical services; the use of tenant officers in identifying issues of debt and household stress; and a role for education and childcare services in highlighting poverty and domestic abuse. While these public functions are in place, they can be more effective in dealing with complex challenges when joined up.

**Figure 16**

# Liverpool City Plan Principles for People Power Partnership



6.6.5   Realising the full potential of cross agency working relies on creating capacity and giving permission to middle managers within public organisations to engage in community development activity. While collaboration may be supported at a strategic management level and among front line staff, the pressure on middle managers to maintain operational performance can be a barrier to innovation. Removing this barrier requires a shift in resource and culture to enable cross agency working to flourish.

6.6.6   Cross agency working also needs to include a greater use of service co-production between public agencies and organised communities. Co-production approaches can be used in various ways that range from shared decision making on the use of public resources through to operational activity where responsibility for service delivery is shared or contracted to community groups. This not only breaks down some of the barriers between public agencies and communities, but encourages residents to feel ownership of the service activity in their community.

**6.7     Public Policy Development**

6.7.1   The Liverpool City Plan provides a policy framework for action, with the principles of People Power Partnerships at the core of a new approach to delivering transformative change across the City's communities (see figure 16).

6.7.2   The City Plan articulates a commitment:

"*to resourcing and collaborating with our communities so they have the authority, autonomy and capacity to co-design future changes and take more control over defining and shaping the things that matter to them.*"

This also means:

"*adopting an asset-based approach across all public services that recognises and builds on the strengths of individuals, families and communities, rather than focusing on what the problems are. Very often individuals and communities have the answers to the challenges they face but they need public bodies to support and enable them to achieve change rather than do what we think is 'best'.*" [7]

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7   Liverpool City Council (2020) City Plan. Available: City Plan (cityplanliverpool.co.uk) Page 20

6.7.3 The City Plan was recognised by workshop participants as a vehicle to join-up the activities of practitioner organisations. There was an opportunity to ensure that all local area plans (such as housing association neighbourhood plans) were fully aligned and feeding into both strategic planning and monitoring of outcomes and impact at a local level.

6.7.4 A key aspect to increasing resident engagement would be inviting responses around clear issues or themes. This may be more effective in sparking interest and involvement than generic conversations. It was felt by practitioners that community research can generate similar and superficial responses. However, to have deeper conversations may also require longer-term engagement and trust-building not available through the use of one-time surveys and interviews. An important implication of this is a requirement for longer-term and stable funding to build capacity to engage and mobilise residents at a neighbourhood level.

6.7.5 The pandemic has been an important catalyst and compelling justification for organisational change in response to the risks posed by Covid-19. Mobilisation of public and community agencies around existing longer-term issues (e.g., chronic health issues and early mortality) needs to be elevated to a similar status to address fundamental inequalities.

6.7.6 Joint working at an appropriate scale was seen as important. This is both to align, as far as possible, local area activities and also to reflect the social geography of place. Communities do not always correspond with administrative boundaries used by public agencies; this can be a barrier to resident participation. The 'wiring' of local governance should not be obvious to local residents – with public agencies offering a clear and coherent front.

6.7.7 To operationalise joint working arrangements, the challenges of data and intelligence sharing (and more widely the applications of GDPR) need to be resolved to enable joined up approaches to targeted service delivery and an efficient flow of information and intelligence across organisations. Joined up information will allow for greater tailoring of provision.

6.8 There was strong support among practitioner organisations to continue the dialogue and to develop cross agency working. Partners were interested in incorporating the approach and methods developed by the City Conversation in their own planning and consultation activity.

# 7. KEY LESSONS

### 7.1    Overview

7.1.1    The original intention of the City Conversation project was to develop a resident-led partnership to co-produce and test a range of participatory methods to understanding the needs of a deprived community. Using a range of research methods, the project sought to not only generate new and additional data that might help to inform public service design, but to identify how the bonds between public agencies and communities could be strengthened. This outcome would create mutual and lasting benefits for Clubmoor and public agencies in Liverpool.

7.1.2    Almost from the outset, the project was fundamentally affected by the impact of Covid-19. The implications affected the ability of partners to deliver the method and research as originally planned, and also on the wider social context for the work and the capacity of public and community partners to engage at a time of enormous stress and competing demands. In many respects the real value of the project became less about the data generated through the curtailed research than the shared learning that was created by partners working together during a time of adversity:

- The partners went into the project with the intention of getting a better understanding of each other – an objective that was achieved as the project progressed.
- Alongside new familiarities there were new bonds of trust – mutual reliance that, if cultivated, can have longer-term positive benefits for Liverpool.
- The project demonstrated the resilience and adaptability of partnership working – through an open approach to generating and implementing new ideas as the public health context changed.
- The project also underlined the value of participatory research – the fact that Liverpool City Council and the other partners stayed engaged at a time when there were very strong reasons to withdraw, demonstrates both the value of the work and also the commitment to the partnership.

7.1.3    The following provides an indication of the key lessons for each primary stage of the project.

### 7.2    Partnership

7.2.1    There was a strong partnership commitment to the project – it was clear that for both the community and for Liverpool City Council, testing methods of engagement and involving residents in sharing their views on Clubmoor had significant value that went beyond the project into wider policy interests.

7.2.2    The fact that there were clear and established common interests among the partners — Liverpool City Council's asset approach and City Plan, MyClubmoor's Big Local programme, and the Heseltine Institute's public policy role — created a firm foundation for the project and is likely to be a reason that the project continued so strongly through the pandemic. Key factors behind the success of the project partnership appear to be:

- the strong and open convening role by the Heseltine Institute which confidently led and sustained the project, building the trust of partner organisations;
- project outcomes that were of mutual benefit to the individual partner organisations (in addition to the common interests);
- good information flow through the project steering group that reflected a consensual approach to decision making and problem solving; and
- adaptations made to accommodate social distancing (such as the move to meetings using Zoom), which for some of the participants helped to break down perceived power imbalances of working with large public bodies such as the City Council and University.

7.2.3    Alongside the positive aspects of partnership working are lessons for further development of participatory community development activity:

- While there was a strong logic to the three core partners to the project, wider engagement or mapping of other practitioner organisations at the start could have extended the reach of the project and drawn in more support when it needed to adapt the methods.
- Working through MyClubmoor grounded the project in the community hub, but also meant that engagement of residents largely reproduced their profile among research participants, rather than being more representative of the population of Clubmoor ward and surrounding community of the City.

**7.3    Research Findings**

7.3.1    The project methodology was fundamentally affected by the pandemic, with significant underperformance in respect to both the numbers of participants engaged and the ability to implement the resident-led model of community research. The context of Covid-19 removed the core element of visible inter-personal contact from the method, which limited the avenues for engagement.

7.3.2    The survey generated relatively few responses, despite efforts by the partners to use their networks and existing social groups to raise awareness and encourage responses. As discussed in section 5.1, this was a topic of regular debate by partners during the project meetings. Key lessons and reflections include:

- Recognising the particularities of social media engagement techniques is important. There was a lack of experience within the project group of running social media-based research, which limited the critical assessment of the approaches being taken.
- Piggy-backing on existing networks where there is insufficient cross-over of topic or where the survey is too general does not generate responses.
- While partner organisations promoted and shared the link to the online survey, there appeared to be little specific follow-up. This approach may be too passive where people are not already engaged in or understand the purpose of the survey.
- There were question marks on the effects of the digital divide and the extent to which low-income households and elderly residents would be able to access information and the survey.

7.3.3    The interviews started with an expectation that community researchers may be able to play a larger role in the interviews as the situation improved. However, the continuing public health limits meant that all interviews were undertaken by MyClubmoor staff. As described in section 5.2 the interviews generated useful data, but from a smaller number of participants than envisaged in the planning. Lessons from interviews include:

- Using the community researchers in a context of social distancing posed practical and ethical challenges that were not planned into the design of the training.
- Despite not being able to involve community researchers to the extent originally envisioned, the project has created a cohort of trained community researchers that can be deployed on other projects, post pandemic.

- Where there were limited number of respondents available for interviews, a change in the methods to include possible additional follow-up discussions or mini-focus groups could have been used to generate deeper responses to questions.

**7.4    Public Policy**

7.4.1    The City Conversation started with a clear focus of testing methods of participation in the design and implementation of public policy. The history of activity in Liverpool and the evidence from practice during the pandemic have further underlined the importance of resident involvement in community development. While Covid-19 made a significant dent in the planned delivery arrangements of the project, the experience of collaboration is positive for the future.

7.4.2    As planned, wider practitioner involvement in the project was positioned at the end of the project, with the assumption that the task would focus on translating the research results into public policy. Due to changes in project delivery arrangements and the fact that the research results were confirmative rather than providing new information, the workshop discussions focused on plans for future working.

7.4.3    From these discussions there were a number of lessons for the project that will be important for the future design of partnership and participatory activity:

- Earlier engagement of a wider set of public agencies would have benefited the project – while this may have been difficult at the height of the national pandemic, making the research more visible to partners at an early stage may have generated additional ideas on how to adapt the project to changing conditions.
- Establishing a core dataset across public agencies on households in Clubmoor would have been helpful, to understand the composition of the community and to target research recruitment and activity.
- The creation of a voluntary corps of community researchers may have significant benefit for a wide range of public agencies interested in research and engagement.
- Greater emphasis on policy sharing (and operationalisation of policy) is a key issue for the long-term resilience and regeneration of Clubmoor.

7.4.4    To realise the full potential of resident engagement in the co-production of public policy will require a commitment to funding for community capacity building. Continuing and extending the model developed by the City Conversation across the City will need to be resourced to ensure the presence of locally trusted organisations that are able to mobilise

and communicate with local residents. While the form of this may vary across communities, depending on what existing statutory and voluntary organisations are established in the areas, grassroots capacity is vital. Over time the aim should be to normalise participatory structures, creating a culture where engagement and participation are mainstreamed in the operation of public services.

**7.5     Legacy**

7.5.1    A core achievement of the project has been to strengthen relationships between the University, City Council and MyClubmoor and other public agencies engaged in the latter part of the project. The relationship provides a basis for ongoing activity to continue elements of the City Conversation (linked to implementation of the City Plan) and to develop new project activity that increases participatory research.

7.5.2    Discussions are ongoing through the partnership to develop fully a legacy and follow-on set of project activities. These include:

- development of a community research resource hub at the Heseltine Institute – a source of advice and information for partners conducting community-led research;
- a programme of community research, focusing on health and housing issues, using the training and methodology developed through the City Conversation;
- a set of published materials on survey methods and research tools to be made available to partner organisations; and
- funding applications to pilot and evaluate approaches to service co-production in Liverpool.

# APPENDIX 1 - WORKSHOP TRAINING FEEDBACK SUMMARY

| ID | Date of session | I understand my role in the project | I recognise what makes a good interviewer | I understand why we are undertaking this research in Clubmoor | I have a better understanding of research techniques | I understand the importance of confidentiality | I feel better equipped to deal with sensitive or difficult situations | I enjoyed the session | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 24/02/2020 | Neutral | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | As I am not a resident (church interest) & will be using personal time [unclear] this project - I would like to know what's expected if I [unclear]. |
| 2 | 24/02/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | First time visited MyClubmoor hub, and really enjoyed the entire session & looking forward to being involved in the near future, getting the word out & making even more of a difference in the community. |
| 3 | 24/02/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | It was a very informative and interesting group discussion. |
| 4 | 24/02/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | |
| 5 | 24/02/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | |
| 6 | 27/02/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | All good, can't wait to get started |
| 7 | 27/02/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Excellent [unclear] and training |
| 8 | 27/02/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Just what the community needs. |
| 9 | 10/03/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Thanks John! |
| 10 | 10/03/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Great idea. Great for the community |
| 11 | 13/03/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | |
| 12 | 13/03/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Thoroughly enjoyed the learning session. Answered why being a researcher is importatnt and how behaviours impact. Project being run correctly. Hows this will/may assist the community |
| 13 | 13/03/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Fab teaching. Lovely and plentiful food. Nice venue. |
| 14 | 13/03/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | |
| 15 | 13/03/2020 | Positive | Positive | Neutral | Neutral | Positive | Positive | Positive | |
| 16 | 13/03/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Was useful to meet people from all the different areas/networks |
| 17 | 13/03/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | |
| 18 | 13/03/2020 | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive | Brilliant |

# APPENDIX 2 - INTERVIEW GUIDE

**INTRODUCTORY TEXT – TO BE READ OUT AT THE START OF THE INTERVIEW.**

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today. My name is [**SAY NAME**] and I am calling from MyClubmoor on behalf of the City Conversation project in Clubmoor.

The City Conversation is a project being run by the University of Liverpool, Liverpool City Council and MyClubmoor to find out about the issues most important to local residents. The aim is to use the research to improve public services and the support available to people in this community.

The project is obviously taking place at a difficult time and we are interested in your views both about your community before Coronavirus and during the lockdown over the last couple of months.

Our interview today shouldn't take too long. I will ask you a number of questions about your experience of living in Clubmoor and how your community could be improved. To help us to catch everything that you say, I would like to record the interview. The recording will be typed up and used for the final report, but the information will be anonymised, so no-one will be able to identify you.

You can stop the interview at any time or ask me to explain a question if it's not clear to you. Are you happy to continue?

**QUESTIONS**

**Just before we start, can I confirm:**

- Your gender –
- Your age –
- Your ethnicity –
- Your home postcode -

1.  **Can you start by describing Clubmoor to me?**
- *What are the best things about Clubmoor?*
- *Are there things in Clubmoor that could be improved?*
- *Would you recommend Clubmoor as a place to live? [ask why?]*

2.  **Thinking of life before the lockdown, is Clubmoor a place where you and your family can have a good life? Please explain.**
- *What about the type of work you are usually able to do?*
- *Are you able to get access to the health services you need?*
- *Are there community activities (e.g. clubs, churches, youth groups) that you can join?*
- *How about local transport around your area?*
- *What about the quality of housing?*
- *How safe do you feel in Clubmoor?*

3.  **Has the Coronavirus crisis changed your view of Clubmoor? Please explain.**

4.  **In what ways can public agencies [such as the City Council, Police or Health Service] help to make your life and your neighbourhood better?**
- *Are there ways that public agencies can better listen to local residents? How?*

5.  **Thinking about your experience of the Coronavirus lockdown, are there things that you or others in your neighbourhood can do to improve life in Clubmoor in the future?**
- *Specifically, what can individuals do?*
- *What about ways the community can work together?*
- *How can the community work better with public agencies?*

Thank and close …

# UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL | Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place

The Heseltine Institute is an interdisciplinary public policy research institute which brings together academic expertise from across the University of Liverpool with policy-makers and practitioners to support the development of sustainable and inclusive cities and city regions.

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