

**OUR GAY
VILLAGE M1**

MANCHESTER



Manchester's Gay Village Action Plan

A Report for Manchester City Council
by Hatch

March 2024



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Introduction



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Introduction

Navigating the Action Plan...

Hatch was commissioned by Manchester City Council (MCC) to undertake a listening and learning exercise during 2019 and early 2020 (Manchester's Gay Village: Past, Present, and Future). Following the completion of this comprehensive work in early 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic struck, and the UK entered lockdown.

Moving forward three years, and in a post-pandemic context, Hatch was commissioned by MCC to develop, in collaboration with MCC officers and local stakeholders, a targeted Action Plan for Manchester's Gay Village. Drawing on the previous commission's findings, as well as more recent information and engagement, this Action Plan is focused upon delivering positive outcomes and solutions for the Gay Village with recommendations that MCC can feasibly deliver on, including through partnership working with stakeholders.

This Action Plan comprises the following sections:

- + **In Review: “Manchester’s Gay Village: Past, Present, and Future”** which summarises the key findings and recommendations presented in the 2020 listening and learning exercise commission. This includes the need for capacity building and upskilling, diversity and inclusion, day-time economy, arts and culture, and wellness and wellbeing.
- + **The Gay Village Today** which presents an updated picture of the Gay Village in 2023. This includes summarising the local policy context, changes in socio-economic conditions, a review of local, national, and international case studies, and refreshed local stakeholder perspectives.
- + **Action Plan** which presents the process undertaken to develop the Action Plan, including:
 - + A distillation of key messages and themes from the previous commission's findings, as well as the 'Gay Village Today' exercise, into a Framework of Local Need. This Framework summarises the main needs and opportunities of Manchester's Gay Village, which this Action Plan is seeking to respond to.
 - + An overview of the Key Actions
 - + Detailed overviews of each Key Action, including the overall vision, specific sub-actions, alignment to the Needs Framework, and implementation.
- + **Implementation** which presents a high-level overview of the implementation process and next steps for the delivery of the key Actions by MCC and stakeholders.





In Review: “Manchester’s Gay Village: Past, Present and Future”



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Introducing Manchester's Gay Village

A Distinct Neighbourhood

Manchester's Gay Village is a vibrant and distinctive city centre neighbourhood with a rich and unique heritage, international recognition and celebrated cultural identity.

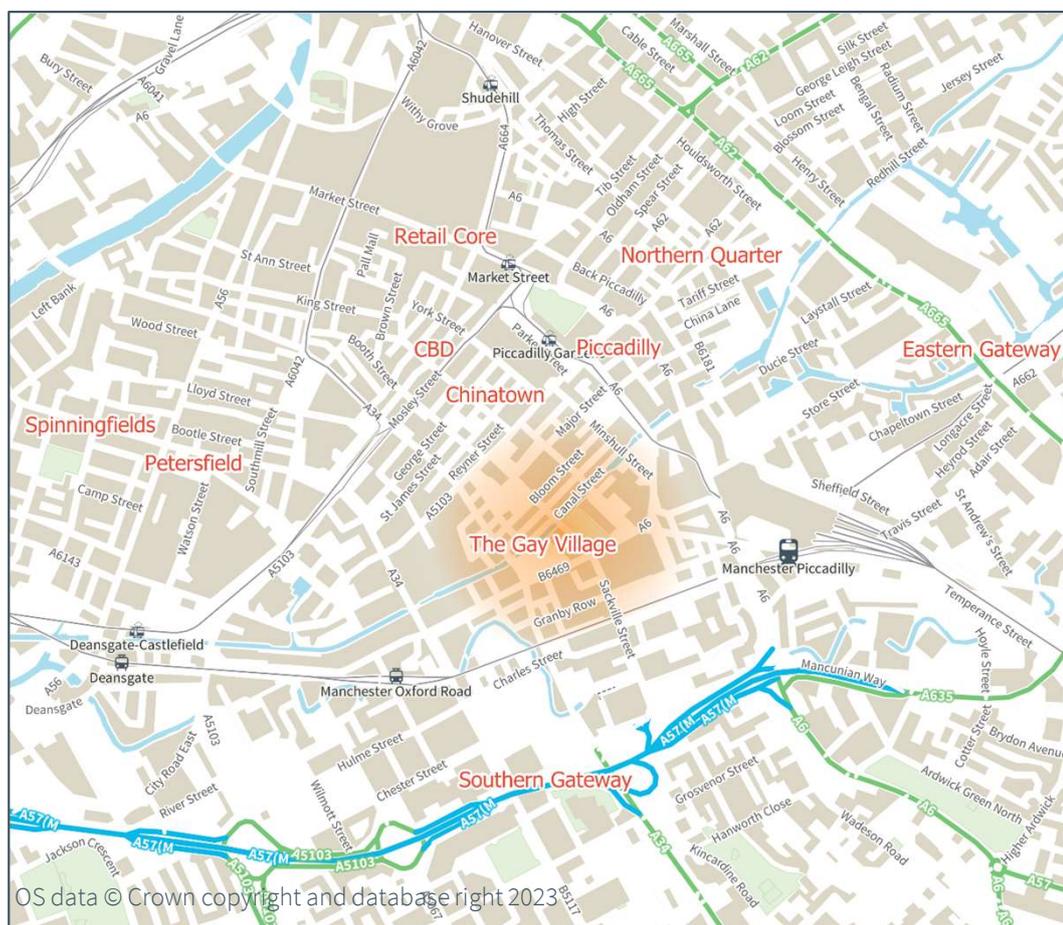
It is centrally located in the southern half of the city centre, in close proximity to Piccadilly train station, Manchester coach station, Oxford Road train station, and well connected through the Metrolink tram network with tram stops nearby. It is bordered by Chinatown to the north, Piccadilly and the Mayfield neighbourhoods to the east, the northernmost end of the Oxford Road Corridor to the west and the emergent ID Manchester regeneration scheme (former UMIST/University of Manchester campus) to the south.

Part of the unique character of Manchester's Gay Village is that it does not have fixed hard boundaries with a relatively unclear delineation of where the Gay Village begins and ends. However, there is broad consensus that the Gay Village consists of the areas bounded by Portland Street, Princess Street, Whitworth Street and Minshull Street, including:

- Canal Street, Richmond Street, Major Street, Bloom Street
- Sackville Street and Gardens
- Chorlton Street

The map below shows the broad geography of the Gay Village and its relationship to neighbouring city centre areas.

Location of the Gay Village in the City Centre



Manchester's Gay Village: Past, Present, and Future

Social History

A Distinct Neighbourhood

Manchester's Gay Village is a vibrant and distinctive city centre neighbourhood with a rich and unique heritage and celebrated cultural identity. It has long evolved to be the focal point for much of LGBTQ+ culture in Manchester. It is a vibrant leisure and night-time economy destination and is visited by people from across Greater Manchester and the wider North-West region, as well as from the rest of the UK and internationally.



A History to be Celebrated

The history of Manchester's Gay Village is rich and vivid. Like gay villages across the globe, Manchester's is a valued and essential social space, and it has become a physical expression of modernity and openness as a vibrant post-industrial city. It is a product of social change and the progression of LGBTQ+ rights in the UK. The Gay Village plays a central role in one of the UK's largest LGBTQ+ communities, as the focal point for wider LGBTQ+ life in Manchester, and as a destination for LGBTQ+ people across much of the north of England and further afield.

Manchester's Gay Village is also distinctly and unapologetically Mancunian. Its roots, like much of modern-day Manchester, are embedded in the socio-economic upheaval of the industrial revolution; the canal after which the Gay Village's most famous street is named is a by-product of this period, as are the cobbled streets and Victorian warehouses that are integral to its history and its development. Similarly to other city centre neighbourhoods, Manchester's Gay Village is characterised by its industrial legacy, post-industrial decline, and contemporary developments. The Gay Village is both unique and a place that has experienced the change that is a feature of modern urban Manchester.

How the Gay Village has developed over the past four decades owes much to the political activism of Manchester's LGBTQ+ communities to protect and promote fundamental rights. A leadership described in historical accounts as 'politically savvy' brought a galvanizing and campaigning drive, championed by Manchester City Council, and which was instrumental in establishing the Gay Village and its communities as a positive force for change. Growing external support and a commitment to equality and fairness saw the Gay Village and the city establish a profile for leadership on LGBTQ+ rights nationally and internationally. Over this period, the Gay Village has evolved from a place of safety for marginalised communities forced to hide away in their city, to an increasingly celebrated space. How the area evolved as a place mirrored the political and social struggle for rights, recognition and acceptance.

The Rembrandt, 1960s



© Manchester Archives, Manchester Library

Canal Street, 1970s



© Manchester Archives, Manchester Library

1998 Section 28 Rally



© Manchester Archives, Manchester Library

Manchester's Gay Village: Past, Present, and Future

Socio-economic Summary

This section presents an overview of the key findings of the 2020 listening and learning exercise. This includes presentation of both the socio-economic characteristics and the local perspectives of the Gay Village in 2020, as well as the resulting conclusions and recommendations from the 2020 listening and learning exercise.

The Gay Village Economy by Day

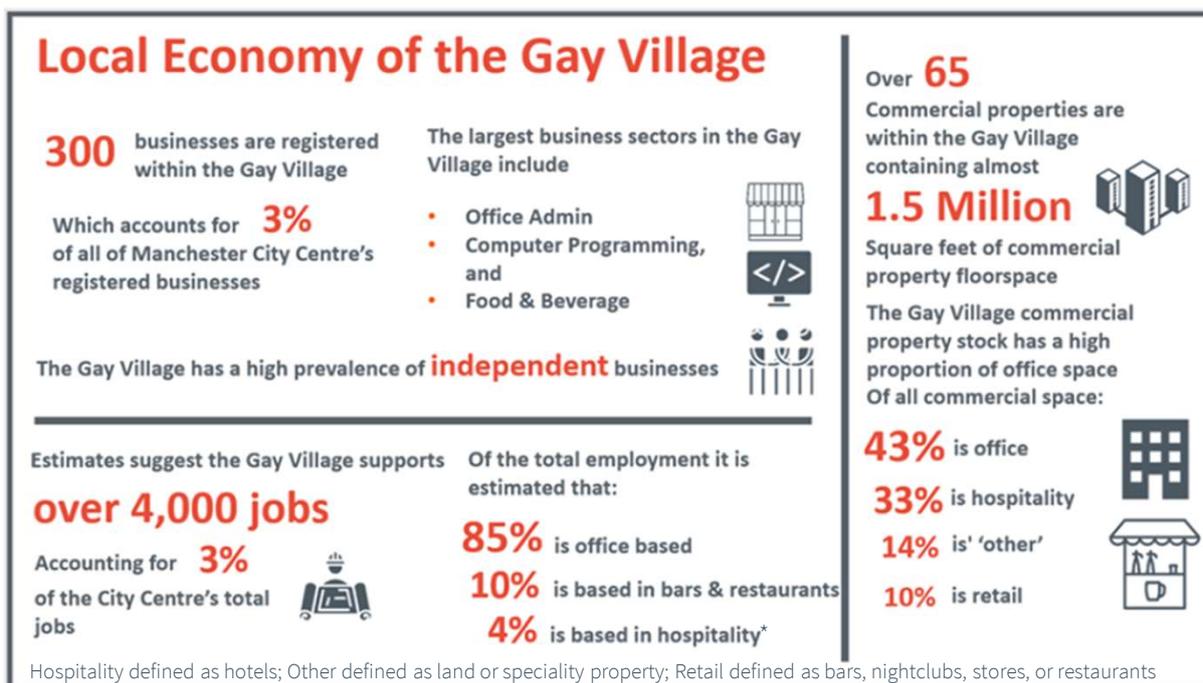
Whilst it was found that the Gay Village is synonymous with its night-time economy, it was also found that it had a significant day-time economy, with around 250 business operating within traditional day-time hours (i.e., 9am-5pm), which are estimated to support around 3,500 jobs. However, the day-time economic activity was found to be largely in office premises, meaning there is limited animation and activation of the streetscape. This was found to lead to the Gay Village feeling relatively quiet during day-time hours.

The Gay Village Economy by Night

The night-time economy is key to the Gay Village and the activity associated with it has underpinned the Gay Village's identity since its establishment as an LGBTQ+ area. It was estimated that c. 400 direct jobs are supported by the Gay Village's pubs, bars, and restaurants. It was found that there were 30 licenced and late-night premises, with many viewing the Gay Village as the destination for late night / early morning entertainment. A high proportion of incidents in the Gay Village reported to Greater Manchester Police were linked to night-time economy and its activities. Many of the night-time economy businesses are longstanding stakeholders that have contributed to the evolution and success of the area.

Residents of the Gay Village

It was found that the Gay Village was home to around 700 residents, with a particularly large Asian population (25%), which is made up of a long-standing Chinese and Hong Kong community. The largest development was found to contain 86 units and most premises to be a mix of privately owned and social rented flats. It was found that the Gay Village had a relatively low number of amenities and services, with concerns expressed around new residential development placing increasing demand on these.



Manchester's Gay Village: Past, Present, and Future

Local Perspectives

The 2020 listening and learning exercise was driven by a central programme of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders across local businesses, residents, community and voluntary groups, and the local LGBTQ+ community. The consultation process included 15 strategic consultations with key individuals, and eight consultations with key groups, including businesses, local forums, local VCSE organisations, and community and social groups. Additionally, an online survey generated over 1,800 responses and two drop-in events were hosted.

The infographic below thematically summarises the key messages highlighted from this programme of engagement, providing an important overview of perceptions and opinions about the Gay Village in 2019/20.

Cultural Identity

The Gay Village is a celebratory place, associated with a large collective memory. However, there are concerns around diversity and inclusion within the Gay Village and around the erosion of the Gay Village's identity driven by non-LGBTQ+ uses and gentrification / development.

Uses, Spaces, And Amenities

The Gay Village is primarily used for leisure, with a strong night-time economy. However, nightlife is becoming less diverse and there are increasing concerns around crime and anti-social behaviour. There is a lack of daytime amenities and social infrastructure.

Urban Environment

The Gay Village has a unique character made up of its industrial heritage and blue & green assets, but parts are neglected and dilapidated, with considerable issues with waste, litter, and street cleaning. There is a lack of a clear spatial identity and problems with accessibility.

Development

There is consensus that new development is encroaching on the culture and identity of the Gay Village, with particular concerns around gentrification driving rent increases. It is unclear how developers are contributing to the area through, for example, S106 agreements.

Looking to The Future

Generally, there was pessimism about the future of the Gay Village, with concerns around the protection of local community uses and independent businesses. A more strategic, joined-up approach to economic development in the Gay Village was highlighted.

As well as the key messages above, several emerging points of action and more tangible opportunities were raised. These included:

- + Creating an overarching vision for the Gay Village, with clear communication mechanisms
- + Developing an action plan to improve night-time economy infrastructure, support the diversification of the Gay Village economy and promote public safety
- + Exploring the feasibility for a visible community space, promotion of café culture, and including new amenities for younger and older members of the LGBTQ+ community
- + Exploring the feasibility of physical accessibility, pedestrianisation, and urban greening as well as exploring options for enhanced street cleansing and waste management
- + Exploring practical ways to manage the process of development coming forward either within or immediately adjacent to the Gay Village and facilitate more constructive pathways between developers and the local community.



Manchester's Gay Village: Past, Present, and Future

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the strategic review of Manchester's Gay Village and associated public consultation and engagement with key stakeholders, the report sets out a set of conclusions and recommendations. The recommendations were intended to help Manchester City Council to enable and support the development of a brighter future for Manchester's Gay Village.



Capacity building and upskilling

Supporting the development of a network which facilitates collaboration between local business stakeholders and MCC to drive a collaborative approach to tackle issues such as public realm investment, street cleansing, waste removal, and event programming.



Diversity and Inclusion

Diversify the current offer in the Gay Village to cater for all members of the LGBTQ+ community. Consider developing a long term and sustainable vision for the Gay Village which considers placemaking approaches to promote celebration of diversity and safe spaces for all.



Daytime economy

To tackle the need for diverse community-focused LGBTQ+ spaces, consider developing evidence-based requirements for developers and assessing the feasibility of the redevelopment of disused buildings, developing business support, and working with venues to develop day-time offers.



Arts and Culture

To help foster a thriving alternative LGBTQ+ cultural scene within the Gay Village, consider providing affordable LGBTQ+ creative/performance spaces, developing a local festival programme, or utilising opportunities through new development to create an independent offer.



Wellness and Wellbeing

Consider how the wellness agenda could inform potential social value contributions of new development and explore how wellbeing spaces could help to increase provision for younger and older members of the LGBTQ+ community.



Cultural Infrastructure Strategy

Consider bringing together these recommendations into a Cultural Infrastructure Strategy involving local and regional anchor institutions, learning from innovative placemaking approaches, and developing an approach for partnerships working for the Gay Village.



CANAL
STREET



The Gay Village Today



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Change Since 2020

Strategic drivers influencing the Gay Village

Since the previous listening and learning exercise in 2020, Manchester, including the Gay Village, has undergone significant change. Given the Gay Village's reliance on the night-time, leisure, and visitor economies, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the area, with many businesses forced to close for significant periods of time and key events, like Manchester Pride, unable to be held. Since the pandemic, there has been ongoing pressures on the Gay Village's economy, including higher energy costs for many small businesses, and the cost-of-living crisis impacting on peoples' ability to spend with local businesses. Additionally, there has been increased residential development delivered both within and surrounding the Gay Village, which for some, has placed additional pressure on the identity and future of Manchester's Gay Village.



Despite these challenges, there has been some resilience within the local business base, with numerous bars and clubs surviving these pressures. Additionally, with the return of regular events, including Manchester Pride returning to the Gay Village, there has been increased community activity.

Given these recent changes and pressures, it is now a good time to refocus on the direction and future of Manchester's Gay Village. To do so, it is important to build up a picture of the Gay Village today, including its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

This Chapter outlines analysis of the current socio-economic conditions of the Gay Village, including:

- + **Policy Context** – review of key local policy to understand the key strategic drivers influencing the Gay Village
- + **Summary of Socio-Economic Changes Since 2020** – analysis of the key socio-economic changes since the 2020 listening and learning exercise, including changes in the day and night-time economies, the physical environment, and the residential community and amenities
- + **Review of Local, National, and International Case Studies** – review of a broad set of case studies, ranging from successful active travel initiatives in Manchester city centre, through to other Gay Villages internationally, to better understand precedents of best practice
- + **Stakeholder Context** – re-engagement of some key local stakeholders to better understand the changes within the Gay Village since the 2020 and to gain stakeholders' updated perspectives on what challenges exist and how these can be practically tackled.

Policy Context

Establishing the drivers of policy

A review of local and regional policies and strategies was undertaken to help better understand the policy and strategic context within Manchester City Centre, Manchester and the wider Greater Manchester region. This is important in understanding how the Gay Village can, through this Action Plan, contribute to the strategic ambitions of the city and of Greater Manchester.

A wide range of local and regional policy documents, across key themes of environment, regeneration, transport, and placemaking (including Strategic Regeneration Frameworks (SRFs), Manchester’s Economic Recovery and Investment Plan, the City Centre Transport Strategy, the Climate Change Framework and the Manchester Strategy to 2025), were reviewed. A summary of the key documents reviewed is presented below.



From this review, five emerging policy drivers have been identified which summarise the local and regional policy context. These drivers have then been used to help inform the development of proposed actions within the Action Plan. This ensures there is a strong alignment with wider ambitions and initiatives within the city and wider region. The infographic presented below summarises these key drivers.



Building on existing assets, and celebrating the city’s richly layered history, to create destinations across the city with unique senses of identity



Holding the connectivity of people and neighbourhoods at the heart of place making



Delivering quality architecture, alongside multi-functional Green & Blue Infrastructure, to help enhance the City’s character and attractiveness



Leading by example to create a healthy, green, and liveable city, which limits the impacts of climate change, and achieves Zero Carbon by 2038



Focussing on the reduction of transport inequality, the promotion of active travel and reducing the dependency on cars

Socio-economic Changes Since 2020

A summary of changes since 2020

The Gay Village Economy by Day:

There remains a present day-time economy in the Gay Village, with the largest employment sectors including accommodation and food services, business administration and support, as well as professional, scientific and technical services.

The Gay Village is home to numerous businesses working within traditional day-time hours (9-5pm), many of which are independents. The development of the Kampus has seen an influx of new local and independent businesses in the Gay Village, including Yum Cha, Nell's, Pollen Bakery, The Barkside and, more recently, the Makers Quarter creative space.

The 2023 vacancy rates of 5.7% within the Gay Village, are lower than the Manchester city centre average of 11.8%.

Floorspace in the Gay Village

10.4%
vacancy rate

Lower than the Manchester average of 12.7%



636k sq ft office floorspace



364k sq ft retail floorspace



1,336 hospitality rooms

Source: CoStar, June 2023

The Gay Village Economy by Night:

The night-time economy has maintained its prominence in the Gay Village with bars, pubs and clubs accounting for a quarter of all business units.

The number of licensed and late-night premises has increased to 36 from 30, including new openings at Kampus. To supplement the strong night-time offer it is noted that introducing new diverse types of activity that complement this could strengthen Gay Village's identity.

There is still a lack of a wider cultural or visible day time offer outside of these night-time economy activities.

Additionally, despite a reduction in crime between Jan-Apr 2022 and Jan-Apr 2023, the Gay Village still has challenges with theft and violence and has seen a rise in sexual orientation hate crime (18 in 2023, 7 in 2022).



36 licenced premises, up from 30 in 2020



Concern that the Gay Village's identity relies on the **late-night economy**



18 hate crimes in Jan-Apr 2023, compared to just 7 in Jan-Apr 2022

Source: MCC licencing data, 2023 2023; police.uk, 2023

Socio-economic Changes Since 2020

A summary of changes since 2020

Physical Environment

Since 2020, the Gay Village and its immediate vicinity has seen the completion of new developments, including Manchester New Square, and Kampus' new mixed-use canal side garden neighbourhood development by Capital & Centric and HBD, which is home to around 500 apartments, numerous independent businesses including Pollen, The Beeswing, Nell's, Great North Pie Co., Red Light (a queer cocktail den), and a new public realm hub.

However, street cleanliness and the quality of the public realm remain major issues, with Richmond Street, Bloom Street, and other side streets of particular concern. There is also a lack of outside public seating, and a need for road and pedestrianisation improvement including physical accessibility, reduced litter (perceived to be linked to the night-time economy activities), reduced graffiti, better lighting, and improved CCTV.



900 households



1,700 residents, up from c.700 in 2020



Largest residential development increased to **500** units, from 86 in 2020

Source: Census, 2021

Residential Community and Amenities

Home to around 1,700 residents, the population of the Gay Village has significantly increased since 2020 (when it stood at c.700), driven by new residential developments in the area, such as Kampus and Manchester New Square. As of 2021, 62% of the population was white and 27% of the population was Asian. As of 2021, there were c. 900 households in the Gay Village, of which 61% of those were in purpose-built blocks of flats.

New developments of up to 500 apartments (e.g. Kampus) have significantly increased the scale of residential development in the area, compared to just 86 units in 2020. There is also some provision of social housing within the Gay Village, with c. 130 flats run by YOUR housing group. These are largely home to members of the Cantonese Community with a focus on the provision of housing for older (55+) people.

Additionally, the Gay Village is home to a vibrant charity and VCSE sector. However, some, such as The LGBT Foundation, have been unable to retain a base in the Village due to affordability issues linked to higher rents in this area. Other services are limited in the Gay Village, and public engagement shows a need for more services and community amenities locally.

Key Socio-Economic Changes

Summary

Based on the review of socio-economic data, a summary of the key changes within Manchester's Gay Village since 2020, across the themes of day-time economy, night-time economy, physical environment, and residential community and amenities, is presented below.



Day-time Economy

Despite an active day-time economy, and larger proportion of independent businesses, street level animation remains limited during the day. Additionally, whilst vacancy rates are lower than the Manchester average, retail/leisure stock is being repurposed into other use types. There remains a significant appetite to diversify the economy with a larger increased day-time offer.



Night-time Economy

A prominent, successful sector with an increase in the number of licensed premises since 2020. Many however, feel that the introduction of a wider cultural or visible day time offer would be complementary to the function and popularity of the Gay Village. There remain some challenges with crime, including an increase in sexual orientation hate crime between 2022 and 2023, which need addressing as part of partnership working.



Physical Environment

Despite significant new mixed-used development spanning both residential, commercial and public realm, challenges persist around the street landscape, cleanliness, lack of high-quality public realm, and physical accessibility to these spaces within the Gay Village.



Residential Community and Amenities

The Gay Village's residential community has significantly grown due to new development. However, there is growing public opinion that services and community amenities are needed to serve this growing population, especially as increasing pressures around affordability have forced some longstanding community services out of the Gay Village (the LGBT Foundation).

The following pages present a review of a broad number of case studies from Manchester, the UK and Internationally. These case studies aim to highlight and showcase successful initiatives, ranging from initiatives in other areas of Manchester City Centre, through to other Gay Villages nationally and internationally, to better understand precedents and best practice.

Manchester Case Studies

Successful initiatives across the City...

Deansgate:

Changes being implemented along Deansgate and Whitworth Street are the latest part of the City Centre Active Travel Scheme, which aims to provide safe links and encourage active travel in the middle of Manchester. The plans include implementing new segregated cycle lanes, a new one-way system, improved facilities for pedestrians, and a new 20mph zone.

The long-standing vision for Deansgate feeds into supporting the ambitions of the City Centre Transport Strategy 2040 for Manchester, which includes the aim of nine in ten city centre journeys being car free by 2040, whilst also improving air quality, greater utilisation of public transport, and increased active travel across the city.

Stevenson Square:

Stevenson Square is in the heart of the Northern Quarter. During the Covid pandemic, hospitality venues benefitted from using the space for tables and chairs, in common with other parts of the city centre.

The introduction of a scheme to improve cycling and walking between Victoria and Piccadilly stations has resulted in the pedestrianisation of Stevenson Square giving the venues the opportunity to continue the popular outside provision.

These changes have been implemented in Stevenson Square as part of the policy ambitions of the Council, which include placing walking and cycling at the heart of transport policy, the encouragement of active travel, as well as working towards making Manchester a Zero Carbon city.



New Green Space:

Across Manchester City Centre, high quality and curated green spaces are being activated to encourage communities to come together. Expansive new green spaces include Mayfield Park and Symphony Park, whilst other innovative attractions include Sow the City's collaboration with the National Trust in developing the 'park in the sky' along Castlefield Viaduct. The project was completed and officially opened in July 2022, with an extension granted by Manchester City Council to keep the sky park open until autumn 2024. It has helped to bring the Grade II listed viaduct, and brownfield site, back into use as a park. The project has included utilising creating diverse wildlife habitats and using a range of bee friendly planting.

UK Case Studies

Examples of Gay Villages elsewhere in the UK...



Kemptown, Brighton

- Kemptown is home to a thriving independent business scene, including LGBTQ+ owned businesses, e.g., The Brighton Box and The Feminist Bookshop. It also has a growing night-time economy offer, including LGBTQ+ owned food offers (e.g., Semola) and nightlife venues (e.g., The Amsterdam, Legends, Revenge Nightclub).
- It is home to significant anchor events, including Brighton Pride, which is one of the biggest festivals in the UK attracting c. 160,000 visitors. The festival hosts a vast array of events (outside of the traditional night-time offer) including dog shows, cabaret, and comedy.
- The area is also supported by a strong community / charity sector, including All Sorts Youth Project, Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard, and Brighton Our Story Project.
- Additionally, the adjacent seafront is the focus of an ambitious regeneration project, with plans to improve the local biodiversity and accessibility. These plans aim to bring a new dimension to the area (namely an outdoor / natural capital offer) to compliment the strong night-time economy.

Soho, Vauxhall, and Wider London

- Rainbow Cities Index ranks London as the most LGBT friendly city in the UK, driven by its global reputation and inclusive employment opportunities.
- The area is home to a well-developed art & culture scene, home to some of the UK's largest LGBTQ+ festivals and venues, including BFI Flare 2023, Glass House Shoreditch, and Old Compton Street which is home to numerous LGBTQ+ bars, restaurants, cafes, and clubs.
- It is also supported by a vast array of Community Groups, including ELOP: East London's LGBTQ+ community centre, London Friend, and Rainbow Green Gardening Club in Hackney. Vauxhall is also home to one of the UK's only LGBTQ+ specific retirement communities, Tonic @ Bankhouse.
- More broadly, the Mayor of London has made specific commitments to supporting the LGBTQ+ community, including:
 - Tackling the lack of tailored housing provision and options for LGBT+ Londoner, including encouraging social landlords to make sure their services are inclusive, e.g., using Stonewall's Service Delivery Toolkit
 - Specific measures to halt further closures of LGBTQ+ venues, including:
 - Culture Micro Grant Programme to support and boost grassroots cultural activity.
 - A Culture at Risk Office to work directly with community groups, businesses, local authorities, developers and others to help identify and protect cultural infrastructure at risk of closure, including LGBT+ venues.

International Spotlight

Toronto, Canada

Toronto is Canada's largest gay village and was established in the 1980s. It has a longstanding history and is now home to a plethora of gay bars, clubs, hotels, shops, and a community centre. The Gay Village in Toronto is known for hosting large scale events, including Toronto Pride Month and week-long Halloween celebrations.



In 2022, an updated, and multiphase, masterplan (see below) was drawn up, which set out several key priorities and recommendations for the area, including:

- **Pedestrian priority** – providing opportunities to engage and linger longer
- **Experiential gateway** elements – although home to several visual cues (painted crossings and themed street signage) the area lacks a real arrival experience that will lead pedestrians into the area
- Public art, branding, street lighting as a way to **celebrate identity** and provide wayfinding
- **Safe and welcoming public spaces** – fostering community through enlivening the public realm, day and night - e.g., activating under-utilized areas, creating active laneways, creating tree canopy areas or parkettes.

The Business Improvement Area has worked with the resident and business community to bring forward several projects and planning initiatives, focusing on:

- 1) A pedestrian-first approach
- 2) Street animation - using parklets, murals, and linking the street and retail frontages to invite visitors to linger longer
- 3) Using nearby parks as networks of public open space as an alternative commuter route, event space, or destination for visitors

Short Term

1-2 Years

- Introduce colours & visual identity
- Place kits & temporary parklets
- Hanging baskets & planters
- Laneway murals
- C-W intersection artwork

Medium Term

3-5 Years

- Parklet pilot project
- Pedestrian poles and gateway marquees
- Corridor-wide furnishings including benches, bike parking, solar lighting
- Small laneways

Long Term

6 Years +

- Sidewalk Bump-outs
- C-W intersection enhancements
- Permanent public art
- Laneway paving, planting, and lighting

International Spotlight

Sydney, Australia

In 2020, the City of Sydney extensively consulted their communities on ways to revitalise Oxford Street, which sits at the heart of the LGBTIQ+ community in Sydney. The result was **amendments to the 2012 Development Control Plan**, which came into force in December 2022. Through facilitating a more small-scale, fine-grained developer led model for increasing creative spaces, the aim of the amendments are to deliver a 24-hour precinct anchored by two major arts schools, with a strong creative industries day-time focus and a cultural nightlife offer.

The new controls on Oxford Street designate the Street as a Cultural and Creative Precinct. The controls include:

- Requirements to retain heritage whilst also encouraging renewal through development
- Requirements for active street frontages
- Unlocking uplift in exchange for increasing creative space
- Permitting additional height in exchange for safeguarded cultural and creative space which meets lower market rent

An additional document aimed at complimenting and building on the events of WorldPride 2023 is the **Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ Social and Cultural Place Strategy**. This Place Strategy sets out how culture will be encouraged as a driver of enterprise, as a source of job creation, and as potential for placemaking in the Oxford Street precinct. In turn, fresh life can be brought to the Oxford Street area, whilst ensuring the history of Oxford Street can be preserved, character can be maintained, and the community remain safe. This includes:

- **Recognising historic LGBTIQ+ places** – e.g., using the City archives as a resource for dynamic heritage interpretation
- **Retain LGBTIQ+ character in businesses** – e.g., LGBTIQ+ inclusion principles and guidelines in Plans of Management; Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ Precinct Business Charter
- **Increase LGBTIQ+ cultural and social space** – e.g., support the establishment of a LGBTIQ+ Museum; introduce a cultural spaces start up grant
- **Increase LGBTIQ+ visibility** – e.g., murals and street art celebrating LGBTIQ+ history and heroes; public art projects by LGBTIQ+ artists; LGBTIQ+ inclusive messaging throughout the precinct.



Deep Dive: The National Art School (NAS)

The Strategy highlights the importance of the proximity of Oxford street to the National Art School (and the UNSW Art and Design Campus), and how education facilities such as the NAS serve to anchor the precinct and foster more creativity and innovation in the area. The NAS is a tertiary level art school located on the grounds of the former Darlinghurst Goal, which includes a number of heritage buildings. The NAS has recently been permitted additional uses to support the school's role as a cultural destination, increase public access, and provide the opportunity to extend their programme to the community.

Lessons Learnt

How can the Gay Village learn from success elsewhere?

Based on the review of local, national, and international case studies, the key lessons for informing the Gay Village Action Plan are summarised below. These represent mechanisms and priorities which could be similarly applied to the Gay Village to help tackle some of the area's most pressing issues and challenges.



Welcoming Streetscape

How can the streetscape be improved to make a more welcoming experience, especially for pedestrians?



Anchor Place / Experience

How can an anchor place or experience be utilised to create a more diverse offer outside of the night-time economy?



Art & Culture to celebrate identity and heritage

How can art and culture be used to enhance the area's unique identity – e.g., experiential gateways and branded way finding?



Active SME's as drivers of change

How can local businesses be supported to drive change – e.g., independent businesses creating opportunities for local artists in the Gay Village?



Active charitable / VCSE / Community sector

How can the existing third sector be supported to catalyse further changes within the Gay Village?



Delivery of improvements as a catalyst for further change

How can local organisations be involved in the delivery of changes and catalyse community building?

Stakeholder Context

Gaining updated local perspectives on Manchester's Gay Village...

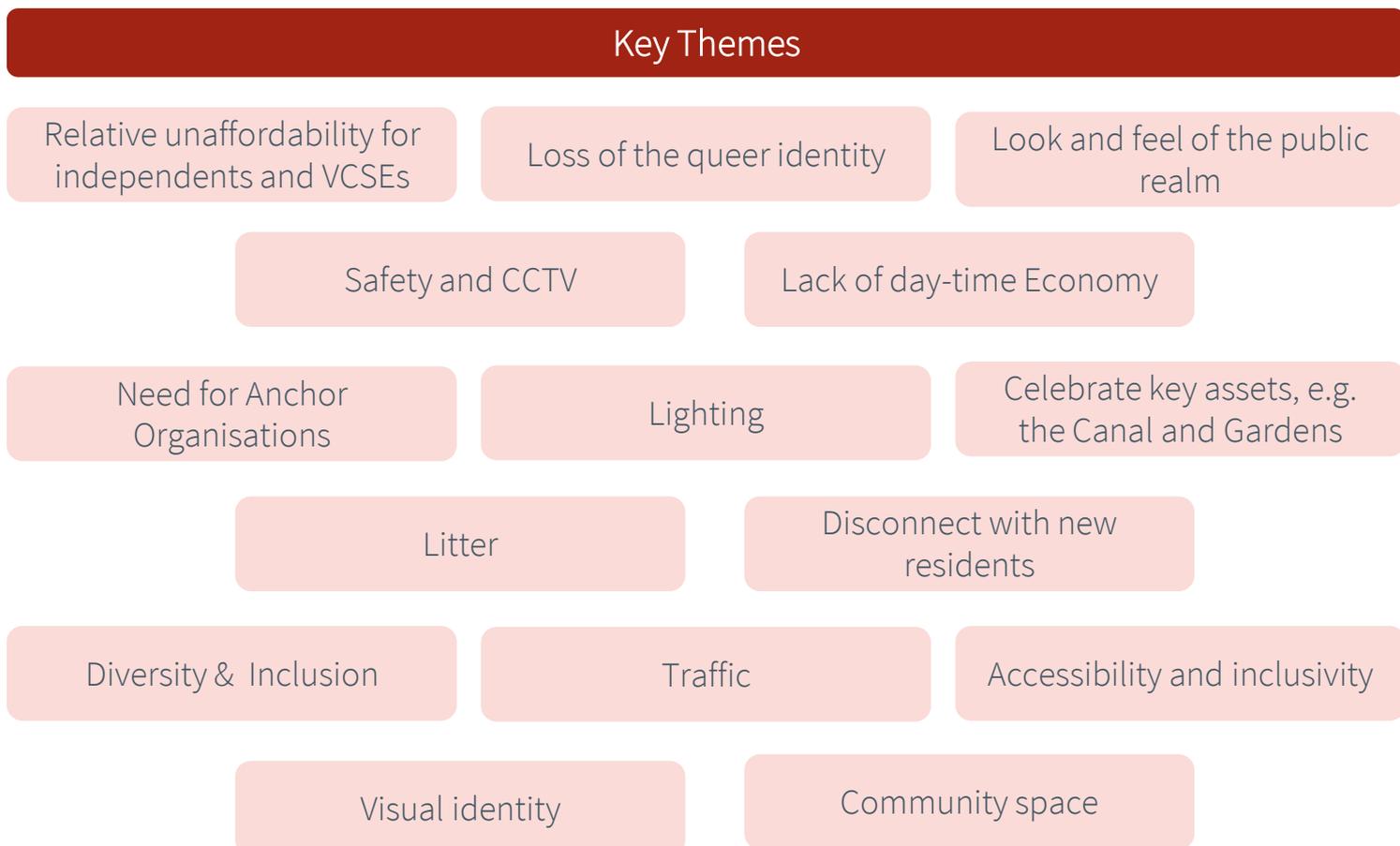
As part of the 2020 Listening and Learning Exercise, significant stakeholder consultation was undertaken. This included 2 public drop-in events, 15 strategic consultations, 8 focus groups, and an online survey which received almost 2,000 responses.

To build on this learning, and to ensure that the action plan reflected further key points which emerged in the intervening years, the views and opinions of some of the Gay Village's key stakeholders were sought via some additional strategic consultations. These consultees included:

- The LGBT Foundation
- The Canal and River Trust
- Friends of Sackville Gardens
- Manchester Pride
- Greater Manchester Police
- Manchester City Council Officers & Councillors

These consultations involved targeted discussions on some of the most pertinent priorities and challenges for local stakeholders and specifically their views on practical solutions to tackle these. The consultations have been used to both understand the key priorities for local stakeholders, as well as to inform the development of specific actions. Hatch also attended a Village Action Forum (VAF) meeting, with MCC officers providing updates to the group on the commission's progress.

The infographic below summarises the key issues raised by stakeholders.





Action Plan



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Action Plan

Framework of Local Need

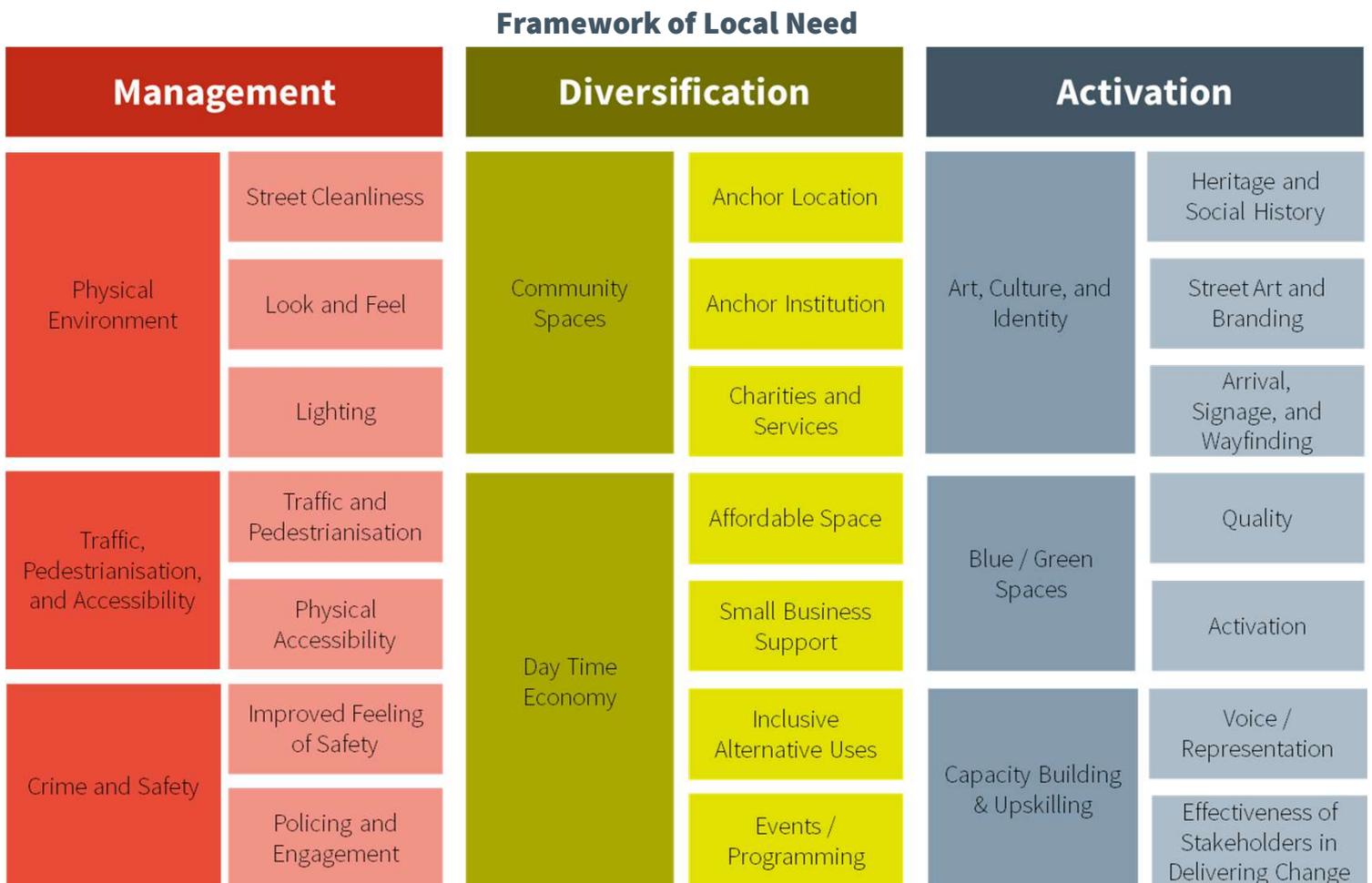
Based upon the insights, evidence and recommendations from the previous commission, which included drawing on extensive stakeholder engagement, as well as the updated policy context, socio-economic data analysis, review of local, national, and international case studies, and new stakeholder engagement, the following **Framework of Local Need** has been used to summarise the main needs and opportunities of Manchester’s Gay Village. It is centred on **three** overarching themes:

Management: How can the management of Manchester’s Gay Village physical spaces and infrastructure be used to bring improvements to the cleanliness, look and feel of the physical environment, enable greater physical accessibility, improve road safety, and foster feelings of safety?

Diversification: How can the physical spaces, the activities, and the uses of Manchester’s Gay Village be diversified to bring anchor institutions and services back into the Gay Village, deliver greater community benefit, diversify the local economy, and provide more inclusive and diverse events and programming?

Activation: How can Manchester’s Gay Village be activated to celebrate the area’s heritage and social history, diversity of local communities and stakeholders, and maximise the potential of existing blue and green infrastructure assets?

The Framework of Local Need has been used to inform the development of the Action Plan, to ensure proposed actions are **responding** to the identified needs and opportunities that are most relevant to the local area and communities.



Action Plan

Overview of Key Actions

Taking into account the detailed evidence base and the Framework of Local Need, a series of Key Actions have been developed, which are intended to address the most pressing priorities and challenges for Manchester's Gay Village. The actions are structured under the three main themes presented within the Framework of Local Need of:

1. **Management**
2. **Diversification**
3. **Activation**

The Key Actions span a broad range of activity, ranging from short term activity to address longstanding neighbourhood management problems, to longer term ambitions to secure a community hub for the Gay Village. A summary of these Key Actions are presented in the infographic below.

The proceeding pages present each of the Key Actions in detail, including the overall vision, specific sub-actions, alignment to the Needs Framework, and overview of necessary implementation. Although these Key Actions have been presented in isolation, to enable detailed description of each action, many of them are cross cutting and will build upon the strengths of other Actions. Therefore, it is important that these actions are delivered via a joined-up approach, whereby MCC and key stakeholders work in partnership and are aware of and can build upon the success of activities being delivered across the Gay Village.

Overview of Key Actions

Management	Diversification	Activation
Neighbourhood Management Plan	Community Anchor Building	Visual identity / brand
Tree and Lighting Improvement Works	Curated Programme of Events	Social history and heritage trail
Pedestrianisation Improvement Measures		Street Art and Murals
Feeling Safe, Policing, and Stewardship		
Planning & Licencing Influence and Engagement		

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Management

Neighbourhood Management Plan	
Vision	Manchester City Council (MCC), working with local stakeholders to share responsibility for the day-to-day management issues of the Gay Village to bring improvements to the physical environment.
Actions	Convene a neighbourhood working group of key MCC officers and key neighbourhood stakeholders, including community representatives, VCSEs, and businesses.
	Working group to develop a co-designed Neighbourhood Management Plan. This should outline all relevant statutory responsibilities (providing transparency and clarity on MCC's role/functions), as well as outline all agreed neighbourhood management responsibilities that local businesses, stakeholder groups and organisations can deliver. This approach will provide a transparent and clear method for the delivery of day-to-day neighbourhood management issues. Consider collating a calendar/schedule of management activities in the Gay Village to provide further clarity and transparency.
	Collaboratively agree the key priorities for neighbourhood management in the Gay Village and the best ways to address this. Incorporate these priorities and actions into the Neighbourhood Management Plan. These responsibilities should address issues and build on existing activities, including : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street cleanliness • Commercial Waste management (contracts to include emptying & cleaning of bins, coordinated waste removal times, etc.) • Quality of paving and roads (MCC is already exploring opportunities to resurface Bloom Street and Richmond Street and to reinstate faded road markings) • Drainage issues
Alignment to Needs Framework	Need to address the persistent physical environment issues within the Gay Village, including street cleanliness and the look and feel of the area.
	Need to empower local stakeholders to facilitate local ownership and change .
Implementation	The MCC Neighbourhood Management Team will be responsible for convening the working group as a short-term action. Over the medium term, the working group will need to understand required mechanisms of change for each of the priorities (e.g., renegotiating/realigning waste management contracts), mapping available powers, and funding, where necessary, and procurement of services, where necessary.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Management

Neighbourhood Management Plan	
Progress	<p>A full neighbourhood audit was undertaken with a separate specific highways focused session in January 2024. Both were led by the MCC Neighbourhood Management team with support from the City Centre Growth & Infrastructure service, capturing the key issues identified within the actions section of this table, and adding a responsible MCC lead .</p> <p>Relevant internal MCC and key community stakeholders are currently being mapped. Once established, this network will provide monitoring oversight and hold responsibility for updating the neighbourhood management plan as progress is made / new issues arise.</p>
Next Steps & Timescales	<p>A Gay Village neighbourhood management network, including key external stakeholders, will be established in Q1 2024 with a schedule of bi-monthly meetings to follow. This will improve coordination, oversight, and accountability in relation to the actions comprising the Neighbourhood Management Plan.</p> <p>A collaborative plan for a consolidated commercial waste strategy on Richmond Street will be developed and consulted on throughout the first half of 2024 (H1). If supported by stakeholders, this would be implemented in second half of 2024 (H2).</p> <p>An area-based schedule is currently in production which will encompass the identified cleansing issues. This is expected in Q1 2024, covering a 12-month period and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Sweeping inc. Cobbled Areas • Tree Pit Cleansing & Planting • Junction Boxes • Canal Walls & Balustrades • Public Bin Jet Washing • Street Furniture Cleaning <p>The current condition and required actions identified within the highways audit will be captured within an highways management document for the Gay Village. A costed schedule will be produced in Q1 2024 detailing a phasing and implementation plan for the next 12 months. Any major highways infrastructure work required that falls outside of the MCC maintenance programme will be costed and presented to senior MCC stakeholders to agree an approach.</p>
Reporting	<p>Progress will be reported via update reports to the relevant internal MCC City Centre Board.</p> <p>Progress reporting and further development of the neighbourhood management plan will also be undertaken at the newly established bi-monthly Gay Village Neighbourhood Management network and the existing Village Action Forum.</p>

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Management

Tree and Lighting Improvement Works	
Vision	Delivery of new sustainable tree and lighting improvement works which contribute to the look and feel of the Gay Village and help create a sense of identity and place.
Actions	MCC to identify trees on Canal Street which need replacing (due to damage/disease). Replace those trees (in order of need) with trees suitable for the local environment and conditions.
	MCC to identify and install sufficient lighting supporting infrastructure to enable the safe and sustainable erection of business-owned lighting on Canal Street .
	MCC to engage with businesses on Canal Street to inform and raise awareness on self-funded sustainable and appropriate lighting sources.
	Include monitoring and evaluation of these works, and any further tree and lighting improvement works (outside of the immediate issues being tackled) into the scope of the Neighbourhood Management Plan. Under the Neighbourhood Management Plan, consider opportunities to engage with businesses on Richmond Street and Bloom Street to understand appetite for similar supporting lighting infrastructure to help create a cohesive identity throughout the Gay Village and tackle lighting and safety concerns on those streets.
Alignment to Needs Framework	Need to provide adequate lighting within all areas of the Gay Village to address issues of perceived lack of safety.
	Need to improve the look and feel of the Gay Village and create a cohesive identity.
Implementation	MCC to utilise existing funding to replace trees that have been most affected, as an immediate action.
	Over the medium term, MCC to identify funding sources for the procurement of suppliers and services of further tree replacement and lighting infrastructure installation (this may be phased in order of need). There are then opportunities, working with stakeholders, to explore locations for further lighting improvements within the Gay Village in the medium-longer term.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Management

Tree and Lighting Improvement Works	
Progress	The neighbourhood audit undertaken in January 2024, identified the locations of current bespoke lighting and the infrastructure which supports this lighting. This captured lighting within the public realm omitting erected / linked to private properties and business premises within the Gay Village.
	A separate tree audit was undertaken in January 2024 with the MCC Neighbourhood Management Service and Grounds Maintenance Team, respectively. This assessed the condition of trees within the area identifying diseased and damaged trees for removal and capturing pruning requirements.
Next Step & Timescales	The findings of the tree audit will now inform the “tree improvement” section of the neighbourhood management plan. Phasing the replacement of diseased trees from the second half of 2024 (H2) . This will also include the identification and full costing for opportunities to implement new / additional tree planting.
	The outcomes of the lighting review undertaken in January 2024 will support the development of a costed delivery plan for lighting enhancements. This will be produced by Q2. 2024, incorporating engagement with businesses to understand appetite for supporting lighting infrastructure enhancements and inform the next steps to improve character lighting collaboratively.
Reporting	The City Centre Neighbourhood Management Coordinator within the MCC Neighbourhood Management team will be the responsible lead for this activity with support from the City Centre Growth & Infrastructure service.
	Progress will be reported via update reports to the relevant MCC Board. This will incorporate any funding requirements associated with both tree and lighting enhancements within the Gay Village.
	The development of a lighting enhancement delivery plan will be co-designed with businesses and stakeholders within the Gay Village. Updates and milestones will be fed into the existing stakeholder forums at appropriate intervals. This will include the Village Action Forum and Village Licenced Business Association.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Management

Pedestrian Improvement Measures	
Vision	Pedestrian-first, safe and accessible Village area which delivers wrap-around benefits, including an improved look and feel to the Gay Village and improved levels of safety and air quality.
Actions	MCC to build further on existing feasibility and options work and commission an enhanced transport and public realm study for the whole Gay Village area. Working with the Neighbourhood Management Plan Working group, this commission should explore pedestrian improvement measures across the Gay Village, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing traffic flow • Pedestrianisation of key streets • Potential for dropped kerbs • Improved paving • Realignment of street furniture, • Seating areas to support both day and nighttime economy uses
	MCC to explore opportunities to incorporate learnings from the disability lived experience study of the Gay Village.
	MCC to work with key stakeholders on the successful delivery of pedestrian improvement measures.
Alignment to Needs Framework	Need to address issues of high traffic flow and lack of pedestrian priority within the Gay Village, which contributes to issues around safety, air quality, look and feel, and physical accessibility.
	Need to take a holistic picture of the whole Village area to deliver co-ordinated improvements that work for the area as a whole.
Implementation	This action will need to be delivered as part of a longer-term ambition for the Gay Village, building on strong evidence, analysis and feasible options to address pedestrian, vehicular and accessibility needs in the Gay Village. MCC to identify funding sources (e.g., active travel funding) for both the commissioning of the study and then the delivery of the suggested measures.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Management

Pedestrian Improvement Measures	
Progress	In Q1 2024, work started to de-clutter the highways and public realm within the Gay Village with the aspiration of delivering an enhanced and more accessible pedestrian experience aligned with the city centre wide approach to street clutter and walkability. The audit undertaken in January 2024, noted damaged furniture, and scheduled these for repair / removal in addition to a range of outdated / redundant signage.
Next Steps & Timescales	Monitor the repair and removal of damaged / redundant street furniture throughout Q1 2024 to ensure all logged requests are actioned.
	Undertake a review of pedestrian and visitor wayfinding signage during Q1 2024.
	Further development of the highway feasibility study previously undertaken. This technical note focused on the deliverability of reduced vehicular movements to prioritize active travel and pedestrian experience. During H1 2024 this study will be expanded to look at the wider placemaking and public realm approach.
	The expansion of scope from a vehicular / highways study to a wider movement strategy will include producing a cost schedule and timescale to implement a scheme.
	As this work is further developed, funding sources will need to be identified for any scheme to be implemented. Funding opportunities linked to active travel, public realm enhancements and any adjacent development activity will be explored during 2024.
Reporting	The City Centre Growth & Infrastructure team will be the responsible lead for this activity with support from the City Centre Neighbourhood Management team and Highways service.
	Progress will be reported via update reports to the relevant internal MCC Board. This will incorporate any funding requirements associated with an emergent pedestrianisation improvement scheme.
	Any changes made to the highways network within the area will be subject to the required statutory highways consultation.
	The development of a movement strategy will be shaped by input from all local stakeholders and will utilise existing networks including the Village Action Forum and Village Licenced Business Association.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Management

Feeling Safe, Policing, and Stewardship	
Vision	Strengthening feelings of safety for all members of the community, building on positive and collaborative relationships between neighbourhood stakeholders and Greater Manchester Police.
Actions	MCC to engage with businesses to conduct a CCTV audit of private and public cameras within the Gay Village to understand those areas where there are blind spots and / or lack of visible (from street level) cameras. Where possible, use the realignment of existing cameras to tackle any deficits. If this is not possible, identify options for installing additional cameras to tackle deficits.
	MCC / GMP to explore opportunities for GMP, alongside local premises security and neighbourhood stewardship organisations, such as Village Angels, to develop even closer working relationships and build capacity and understanding on tackling key issues in the Gay Village. This could include building on the attendance of the neighbourhood officer at the VLBA, the Gay Village Action Forum (VAF), and providing new spaces for hosting community outreach events (see opportunities for activities at 103 Princess Street).
Alignment to Needs Framework	Need to address issues of perceived lack of safety within the Gay Village for all members of the community, particularly during evening and night-time activities.
Implementation	In the shorter term, MCC to explore opportunities to use the VAF and VLBA as a vehicle to engage with businesses to conduct a CCTV audit. If necessary, over the medium-term, MCC and the Neighbourhood Management Working Group to explore potential funding sources for additional CCTV camera installation to address any gaps in coverage.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Management

Feeling Safe, Policing, and Stewardship

Next Step & Timescales	<p>Engagement will be undertaken with Greater Manchester Police's local policing team working within the Village. This will ascertain any locations within the Gay Village where there are any gaps in CCTV coverage and issues with lighting levels.</p>
	<p>Details of privately owned external CCTV coverage will be gathered and captured within the relevant section of the neighbourhood management plan. This will be collated throughout H1 2024 and include adjacent developments at Kampus, Manchester New Square and Portland Street.</p>
	<p>Once gathered, the network of private external CCTV cover can be overlaid with MCC's network within the Gay Village to identify any gaps in coverage. The findings of this will then inform if MCC cameras would be better repositioned whether additional provision is required with input from Greater Manchester Police.</p>
Reporting	<p>The City Centre Neighbourhood Management Coordinator within the MCC Neighbourhood Management team will be the responsible lead for this activity with support from the City Centre Growth & Infrastructure service.</p>
	<p>Progress will be reported via update reports to the relevant internal MCC Board.</p>
	<p>Ongoing engagement and updates will be provided via the existing range of community networks and forums including the Village Action Forum and Village Licenced Business Association.</p>

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Management

Planning and Licensing Influence and Engagement	
Vision	Through influence and engagement, ensure that future development positively contributes to the character, culture, social value, and heritage of the Gay Village.
Actions	<p>MCC officers (e.g. including planning, licencing and neighbourhood teams) to engage early with developers, and where possible, utilise Executive approval routes for larger scale developments in the Gay Village (should they come forward), to clearly communicate the importance of the Gay Village as a unique neighbourhood in the city, the need to protect the area's character, culture, and heritage, and to explore possible opportunities and methods to influence and shape developments so they make positive contributions to the successful delivery of actions within this Action Plan.</p> <p>This influence and engagement could include ensuring there is a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of active frontages within proposed new developments, supporting more day-time or community uses • Integration of affordable, creative or cultural spaces within new developments • LGTBQ+ inclusion principles and guidelines, both in the design and operation of new developments • Encouraging meanwhile uses which deliver positive benefits for the local community • Exploring fiscal contributions which can be used to help deliver priority actions within the Action Plan • Exploring in kind contributions to help deliver on works that benefit the wider area and community
Alignment to Needs Framework	Need to improve the look and feel of the Gay Village.
	Need to diversify the local economy to bring more daytime uses into the Gay Village, and offer alternative and inclusive leisure opportunities, programming, and events.
	Need to celebrate the Gay Village's arts and cultural scene, including through supporting local and queer artists.
Implementation	As part of a shorter-term ambition, MCC to actively engage with developers who are bringing forward new planning applications within the Gay Village as early as possible, outlining the ambitions of the Action Plan and the possible ways developers and their technical teams can design and plan development schemes which positively contribute to and safeguard the Gay Village's unique character, culture, and heritage. Delivery of outcomes associated with this activity will be dependent on suitable development opportunities coming forward.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Diversification

Community Anchor Building	
Vision	Creation of a community ‘anchor’ hub within the heart of the Gay Village, which safeguards a long-term home for anchor LGBTQ+ organisations, serves the diverse local community, and maximises the delivery of benefits to the Gay Village and its communities.
Actions	<p>MCC to secure 103 Princess Street (a MCC owned asset at the heart of the Gay Village, currently operating on a limiting long-term lease) as a mixed-use Community Asset for the Gay Village</p> <p>MCC to commission a feasibility study to explore the possible options for uses and activities within the community hub and associated costs. This could include a public consultation exercise to determine the most optimal/needed use of space for the local community. This should include considering the following potential options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relocation of the LGBT Foundation back to the Gay Village (and/or other anchor LGBTQ+ organisations) at 103 Princess Street • Co-location of other community services and organisations • Provision of space for LGBTQ+ art / cultural events, such as comedy, theatre, or music. Consider incorporating a training facility into the offer which supports local queer artists. • Provision of affordable space on the ground floor for small, local, day-time economy focused businesses (explore opportunities for e.g., rolling pop-ups). • Consider exploring options to signpost/provide wrap-around business support to the small, local businesses occupying the spaces. • Provision of space for exhibits around the social history of the Gay Village, including making use of the People’s History Museum banners (if possible) to continue their legacy within the building • Provision of space for local community events, volunteering groups, and outreach activities (including GMP outreach events, Friends of Groups) • Activation of the building through a rolling programme of events, performances etc.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Diversification

Community Anchor Building contd.

Alignment to Needs Framework	<p>Need to provide community space within the heart of the Gay Village to co-locate key LGBTQ+ organisations and other community services and organisations</p> <p>The opportunity to introduce more daytime uses into the Gay Village, and offer alternative and inclusive cultural/leisure opportunities, programming, and events which complement the neighbourhood's existing business and residential offer.</p>
Implementation	<p>In the short-medium term, MCC to explore potential options for the relocation of the current occupants of the building and their archived materials to a suitable alternative location. MCC to commission a feasibility study on the use of the building as a community hub, including exploring the necessary intermediate and longer-term refurbishment works and possible use types within the building. If intermediate works can be undertaken, MCC to explore options for potential 'meanwhile-uses' and activities.</p> <p>Over the longer term, MCC and/or partners to secure necessary funding and carry out refurbishment works (in accordance with the chosen use types). MCC to then coordinate and facilitate the ongoing operation of the asset, including, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-location of services and businesses • Signposting/providing business support • Connecting with local community groups and programming events etc. • Exploring options for asset management/leasing to anchor community organisation(s) or a cross-sector stakeholder board



Action Plan

Detailed Actions – Diversification

Curated Programme of Events	
Vision	The Gay Village as a diverse, thriving neighbourhood for a broad range of activities and events which appeal to all members of the Gay Village’s communities.
Actions	MCC to convene a working group of neighbourhood stakeholders (including, for example, MCC officers, VLBA member organisations, VAF, The LGBT Foundation, Pride, Friends of Sackville Gardens, other local charities and VCSE groups, residents and community groups, and existing anchor institutions) to develop and deliver a curated programme of events within the Gay Village that offer opportunities that extend beyond the existing night-time economy offer. This could include engagement with other local organisations and events such as makers markets or craft and flea markets to deliver events, or direct delivery of cultural or community events by member organisations. MCC would act as a facilitating member making connections between members and providing advice around practical delivery.
	Working group to create a reference list of potential places and spaces within the Gay Village that could host such events. This should include 103 Princess Street and car park sites (e.g. NCP).
Alignment to Needs Framework	Acknowledgement of the benefit that new cultural and leisure activities within the Gay Village , outside of the current offering could provide that are inclusive of, and cater for, all members of the Gay Village’s communities.
	Need to provide a voice and representation for local and diverse community groups and community members.
Implementation	In the medium term, MCC to convene the working group and to communicate MCC’s powers and capabilities to the group (e.g., criteria for street closures, support for running community events, etc.). The working group should engage with local landowners and venues (such as car park operators like NCP, as well as VLBA and VAF) to understand the feasibility and practicalities of using local spaces and places for hosting events. Where possible, MCC should connect the working group with developers to inform the development and delivery of potential meanwhile or community uses as part of new or emerging development proposals in the Gay Village.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions – Diversification

Diversification	
Progress	An internal MCC working group has been established to progress required investment strategy and future use for 103 Princess Street comprising MCC’s City Centre Growth & Infrastructure team, Corporate Estates and Development team.
	A building survey has been commissioned by MCC’s Corporate Estates team to assess the current condition of the building.
Next Steps & Timescales	The building survey will be used to inform a costed schedule of required works to restore the building to the necessary standard for occupation in-line with modern and accessible requirements. This information will be available during Q1 2024.
	Following completion of the building survey, an update note detailing the options for the building will be taken to the relevant internal MCC board by Q2 2024.
Reporting	The joint leads responsible for progressing this activity are the Director of City Centre Growth & Infrastructure and Director of Development with support from the MCC Corporate Estates team.
	Progress will be reported to the relevant internal MCC Boards.
	Updates will also be provided as progress is made to relevant external stakeholder forums.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Activation

Visual Identity and 'Brand'	
Vision	Strengthening the visual identify for the Gay Village whilst celebrating the area's social history and heritage and its arts and cultural scene.
Actions	MCC to explore options to strengthen the visual identity of the Gay Village, including exploring options for a new logo / branding to be used throughout the area, including on waste bins, signage, street banners, paving, street furniture, and within the Gay Village's blue-green infrastructure assets. This should visually make the area clearly identifiable and underpin the unique character of the area. Where possible, utilise local and queer artists to both create the new logo / branding and to deliver the enhanced visual identity.
Alignment to Needs Framework	Need to strengthen the visual identity of the Gay Village which celebrates the areas social history, importance to the city, and diverse community.
	Need to celebrate the Gay Village's arts and cultural scene, including through supporting local and queer artists.
	Need to activate the Gay Village's important blue-green infrastructure assets.
Implementation	As part of a short to medium term aspiration, MCC to install the redesigned logo to be used throughout the Gay Village. Where necessary, identify possible funding sources or local partners to deliver these activities.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Activation

Social History and Heritage Trail	
Vision	Creation of a recognisable identity for the Gay Village which celebrates the area's social history and heritage and arts and cultural scene.
Actions	<p>MCC in partnership with local organisations, charities, community groups, and historical groups to support the establishment of a working group which develops a social history and heritage trail which tells the story of the Gay Village, its assets, and connects the Gay Village's blue-green infrastructure assets, such as the Canal and Sackville Gardens.</p> <p>The working group should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out local stories and history to tell • Identify places to install elements of the trail • Explore diverse and innovative ways to present the trail, ensuring it is accessible for all (e.g., through street art and murals - see overleaf, information boards, QR codes/digital opportunities)
Alignment to Needs Framework	Need to strengthen the visual identity of the Gay Village which celebrates the area's social history, importance to the city, and diverse community.
	Need to celebrate the Gay Village's arts and cultural scene, including through supporting local and queer artists.
	Need to activate the Gay Village's important blue-green infrastructure assets.
Implementation	As part of a medium-term action, MCC to highlight the opportunity for a working group of interested stakeholders to develop the social history and heritage trail. Over the longer term, the working group should develop a Plan for the social history and heritage trail, as well as identify potential funding sources for the installation of the trail (e.g., national lottery funding, private contributions, etc.).

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Activation

Street Art and Murals	
Vision	Creation of a recognisable identify for the Gay Village which celebrates the area's social history and heritage and arts and cultural scene.
Actions	Use of street art and murals to create an experiential gateway arrival to the Gay Village and wider street art trail (building on the street art already within the Gay Village). These should focus on increasing LGBTQ+ visibility in the Gay Village and celebrate LGBTQ+ history and heroes.
Alignment to Needs Framework	Need to strengthen the visual identity of the Gay Village which celebrates the area's social history, importance to the City, and diverse community.
	Need to celebrate the Gay Village's arts and cultural scene, including through supporting local and queer artists.
	Need to activate the Gay Village's important blue-green infrastructure assets.
Implementation	As part of a medium-term ambition MCC, in collaboration with neighbourhood stakeholders, should identify suitable places and assets for street art and murals, this could include MCC owned assets, CRT owned assets, local businesses, etc. During this process, MCC in collaboration with neighbourhood stakeholders should identify potential funding, e.g., contributions towards murals and street art on privately owned assets. Local and queer street artists should be used to deliver the street art and murals.

Action Plan

Detailed Actions - Activation

Activation	
Progress	Aligned with the strategy of strengthening the visual identity and brand of the Gay Village, the implementation of the 'Rainbow Bee' logo on all bins within the village has been progressed. The approach has now been approved and MCC's Communications team are developing the design. The implementation of this will follow in H1 2024.
	The City Centre Growth & Infrastructure team have secured consent in principle to paint the bridge located on Sackville Street. This now requires the provision of final information prior to delivery.
	An options note was produced in January 2024 setting out the opportunities for a rainbow painted designs on the highway, strengthening the visual identity of the Gay Village.
Next Steps & Timescales	The options paper produced relating to rainbow highways murals will be reviewed with MCC highways in Q1 2024 to determine the optimal approach and best location(s) to implement this. This will seek to secure consent and develop a delivery plan in H1 2024 and implement in H2 2024.
	The Sackville Bridge painting is now being progressed by the LGBT Foundation & stakeholders. The aspiration is to run a design competition in H1 2024 to identify an artist to deliver the works in H2 2024.
	The Social History & Heritage Trail theme will be tabled as an agenda item at a Village Action Forum in Q1 2024. To harness community interest in establishing a separate working group to develop this idea.
Reporting	The Strategic Stakeholder & Engagement Lead within the City Centre Growth & Infrastructure team will be the responsible lead for this activity
	Progress will be reported via update reports to the relevant MCC Board.
	Progress updates & coordination will be undertaken with local stakeholders via the existing networks within the area including the Village Action Forum and Friends groups.



Implementation



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Implementation

Delivering on The Action Plan

Implementation

This Action Plan has set out a series of ambitious interventions and activities for the Gay Village which respond to the most pertinent challenges and opportunities within the area, as summarised by the Framework of Local Need. These Key Actions span a broad range of themes, from the management, to the diversification, to the activation of the Gay Village.

The implementation of these actions will vary in the likely timeline for delivery, ranging from some actions which can be more easily delivered within the short term, and often build on work already being delivered by MCC, to longer term ambitions which commonly rely on the identification of appropriate funding sources and longer-term processes, such as Feasibility Studies. A high-level and indicative summary of the potential broad timeframes associated with some actions is presented.

Importantly, to successfully deliver these actions in a way which best benefits the Gay Village and its community, MCC will collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders, including local businesses, community organisations and groups, local charities, residents, developers, and landowners. Responsibilities for the delivery of the various actions will need to be shared amongst these groups to best deliver positive outcomes for the Gay Village.

Next Steps

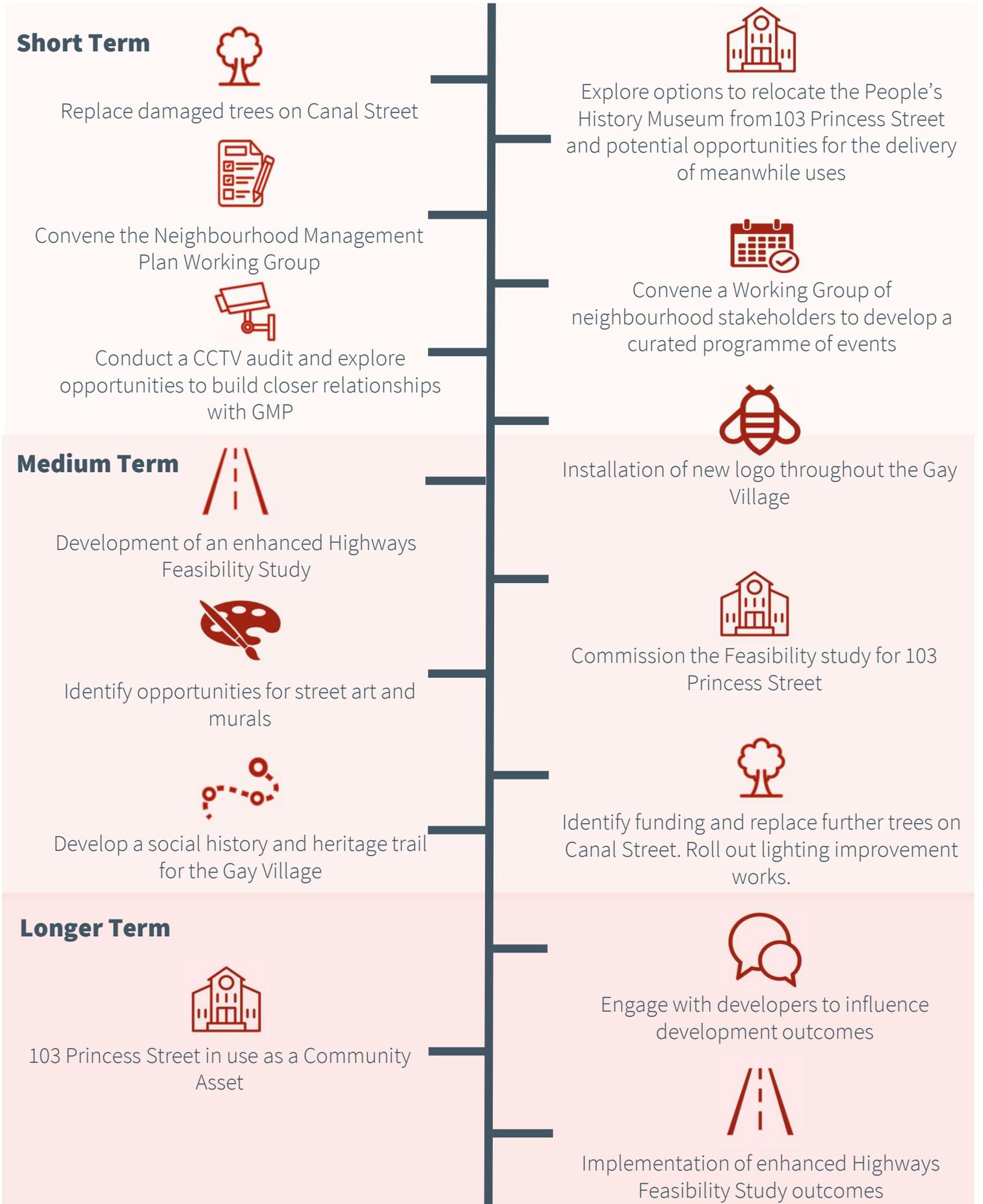
To begin to plan for and deliver the various Key Actions within the Action Plan, MCC will map out the responsible team / persons for each of the actions within this Plan. These teams and persons will be responsible for coordinating and driving the delivery for each of these actions, as well as, where necessary, collaborating with stakeholders to help facilitate the delivery of these activities.

Importantly, this Action Plan represents a coordinated approach to outlining those priority interventions and activities that are most needed for the Gay Village and its community and stakeholders. The Action Plan can act as a living document which can be updated in due course and consulted if, and when, new opportunities emerge or if, for example, available funding from public or private sector sources is made available to deliver interventions within the Gay Village.



Implementation Timeline

Indicative Summary for Action Implementation





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