
The City Conversation in Clubmoor



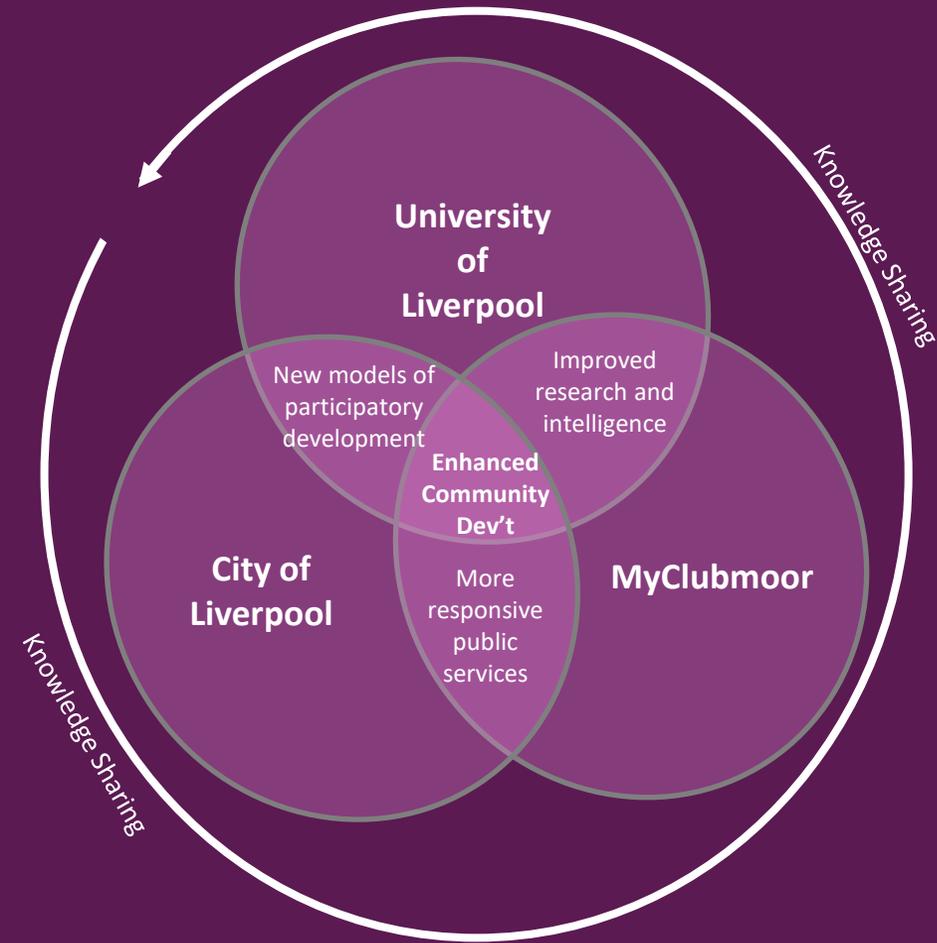
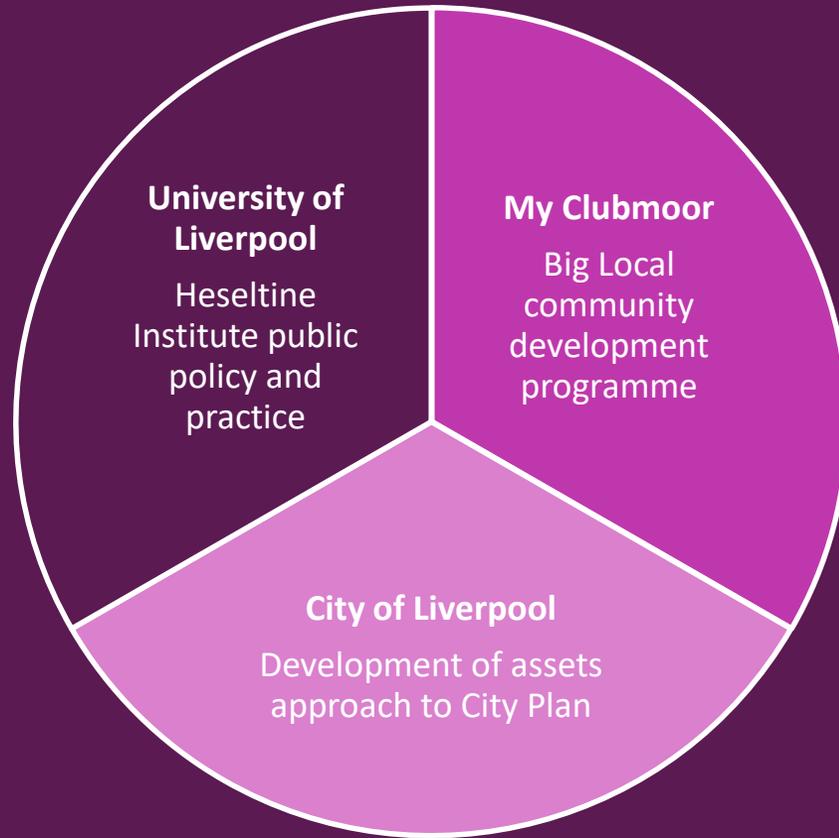
Research objectives

We used an asset-based approach to engage residents who traditionally don't interact with public services. This project provided an opportunity to:

- **Strengthen** connections and trust between the partners (MyClubmoor, LCC and University) and the local community to better understand residents' priorities
- **Pioneer** co-creation methodologies with disadvantaged communities
- **Engage** 60 residents and introduce a *different conversation* with communities that focuses upon prevention and early intervention
- **Gather** data/intelligence to inform and shape future public services
- **Build** local capacity through training 20 community researchers
- **Deliver** 6 citizen focus groups and 2 community workshops
- **Evaluate** the approach and disseminate learning across UK



Research partnership



Community researcher training

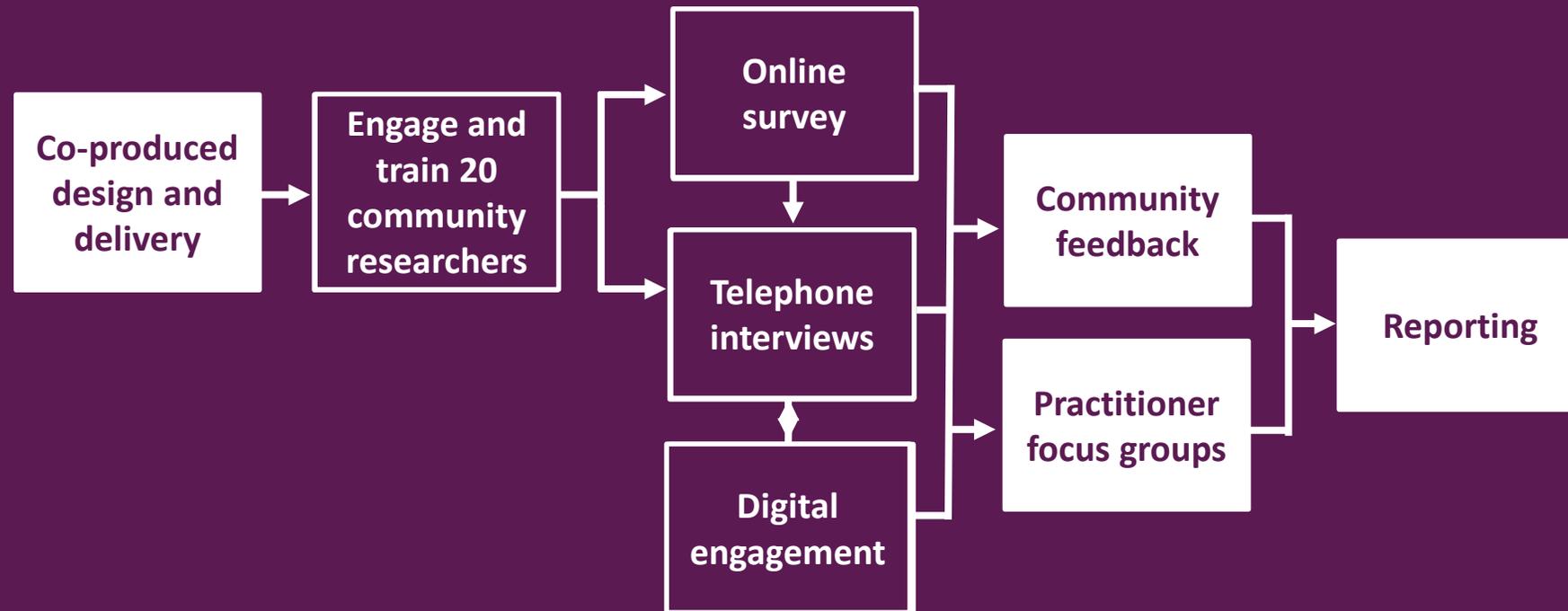
Four workshop training sessions were held in February and early March 2020 to prepare residents and front line workers for being researchers on the project. In total 23 participants attended.

- The sessions generated real interest and enthusiasm among the researchers to begin the project.
- Unfortunately, the last session was just before the Covid-19 lockdown was announced.
- Lockdown prevented face-to-face resident engagement and we had to change the survey design.
- This meant a more limited role for the community researchers in the data collection.



Research design

How we had to change our methods, **pre-pandemic** vs. **post-pandemic**



What data did we collect?



Survey

April – May

48 responses over two months. Some over-representation of middle-aged females within sample; as well as under-representation of BAME people.



Interviews

June – July

26 interviews, with sample comprising mixture of survey respondents, community researchers, and MyClubmoor board members.



Social media

July – August

6 posts on the MyClubmoor Facebook page, with average audience of 942 people. 176 reactions, comments and shares in total (including 25 comments).



Practitioner workshops

November

2 workshops with 20 local stakeholders to ‘sense-check’ findings, gather best practice examples, and feed into recommendations



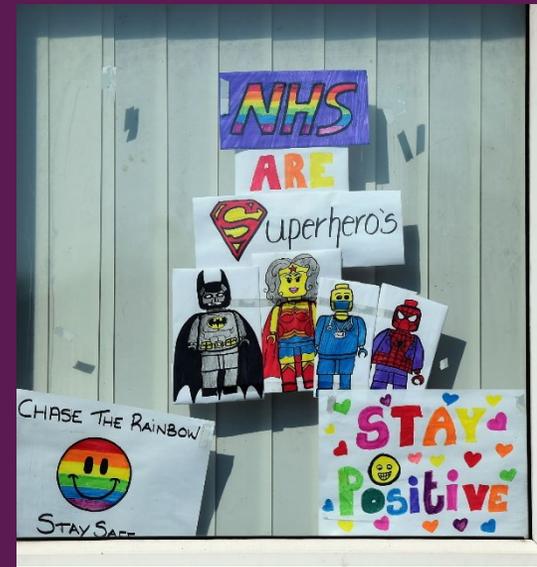
What did we find? (local residents)

Community assessments of Clubmoor ...

- Green spaces and a sense of community were most often highlighted by residents as the **best thing** about Clubmoor; whilst crime / anti-social behaviour and a lack of community provision / 'things to do' were most often highlighted as areas that **could be improved**.
- Although most said they would **recommend** Clubmoor as a place to live (and few felt that the area had got worse), most felt that the area had **changed little for better or worse** in the past five years.
- Despite its effects on public health, wellbeing and the economy, most felt that the Covid-19 pandemic had been a **catalyst for greater community spirit** in Clubmoor.



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

“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

“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

What residents think they and public agencies can do ...



“Just be there more for each other I suppose, and support...but I think in general, people will step forward if they know someone needs help. I think as a city that happens.”

Interviewee



“Let [the community] know this is what’s going on – it’s having that interaction face-to-face, and giving the community a voice.”

Interviewee



“Maybe they could have some event days, where you can go and meet these public agencies. Like a dating app – no, not a dating app! [laughs]. I mean like ... a speed dating event but with agencies.”

Interviewee

What kinds of community engagement do residents want?

- Residents recognised that **blended approaches** to engagement were likely to be the most **inclusive** and **far-reaching**.
- **Digital tools** (e.g. 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.

- For some residents traditional face-to-face methods had an **advantage** over digital methods.

*“I think that knocking at the door is kind of the best thing to do, because **you’re actually getting to speak to someone then.**”*

Sense check

The Clubmoor findings were broadly similar to those of a citywide consultation in Autumn 2019, which had 1,906 participants:

- **Community emerged as a key strength**, with over half saying their community was what they liked about where they lived
- **Areas identified for improvement:**
 - Traffic, transport and roads
 - Street cleanliness and maintenance
 - Crime and antisocial behaviour
 - Local public services and facilities, activities, amenities and maintained greenery
 - Communication / engagement with Council

Public agencies engaging with communities

Two practitioner workshops were held in November 2020 to consider public engagement methods. In total 20 participants from a cross section of public and social agencies working in the city attended.

The aims of the sessions were to:

- Discuss what worked well in terms of engaging with residents and what the challenges were.
- Identify how connections between local communities and public authorities 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.
- Draw together implications for public policy and practice



What did we find? (practitioners)

An awareness of the multiple challenges communities face ...

- During the pandemic engagement methods were adapted by all agencies, with new and additional activity to maintain contact with residents via telephone, video platforms and social media. There was a particular focus on elderly and vulnerable individuals.
- It was felt that Covid-19 intensified many of the social and economic issues that already existed in communities **before** the pandemic.
- Whilst practitioners value the enormous amount of support that grassroots community organisations provide, and have continued to do throughout the pandemic, they also acknowledge the fragility of these vital support systems.
- Many practitioners accepted that a lack of joined-up working between service providers has historically hampered their ability to deliver most effectively for local communities. The pandemic was felt to have presented further challenges to their operations.



What did we find? (practitioners)

Principles for People Power Partnership



A desire to do things differently with other organisations ...

- Practitioners were eager to work more collaboratively across neighbourhoods with colleagues from partner organisations.
- 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 communities.
- Adopting an asset based approach requires strong leadership at the top of organisations, plus greater operational capacity.
- To operationalise joint working arrangements, the challenges of data and intelligence sharing need to be resolved to enable joined up approaches to targeted service delivery.

What did we find? (practitioners)

And a desire to do things differently with communities ...

- Practitioners also accepted that engagement practices must change – arguing that to effectively build **public trust** and a **sense of agency** within communities, engagement had to be more embedded and sustained.
- Practitioners also agreed with a shift towards **community-driven** and **community-owned** engagement; in short, a move away from engagement *with* communities, to engagement *by* communities.
- The potential value of **digital engagement** tools was recognised, but so too were the limitations and particularly digital exclusion.
- For some, experiences during the pandemic reaffirmed the value of **traditional and face-to-face engagement methods**.



The benefits of involving residents and communities ...

“How many times have we parachuted an initiative into an area, given it an amount of funding, and then moved on when the funding finishes without actually tackling the problem? And then, lo and behold, we see it resurface because it never really went away.”

“We don’t have to be the people that do the engagement. People talk to people they know, or their neighbours. I’m not saying we should never do any formal engagement, but I think we need to acknowledge the strength and ... passion which is in communities looking out for each other.”

“We do a lot of one-to-one work virtually ... and it’s so difficult because ... a lot of what we do and what we learn is through body language, and we’ve lost that. So we are getting out again – we’re doing more outreach, more door-knocking ... it’s the only effective way to do things.”

What did we find? (project partners)

- Opportunity to test whether the perceptions and needs of the community were changing. Important to continue to improve understanding of local community.
- Project strengthened MyClubmoor's relations with Liverpool City Council and the University of Liverpool and its engagement in a wider set of issues important to the community.
- MyClubmoor valued the inclusivity / equity of the partnership ('**partnership of equals**') and the strong sense of collective engagement and action.
- Alignment with other projects: Good neighbour, Clickmoor, Incredible Edible.
- Importance of local leadership at community level to direct Covid support.
- Strong foundation for future collaboration, to build on experience and capture the enthusiasm of initial community participation (Community Research Hub idea).
- Scope for wider engagement via Liverpool's 'People Power Partnership' for communities to influence public services.



Implications for policy and practice

- The history of public engagement activity in Liverpool and the evidence from practice during the pandemic 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.
- The project demonstrated the value of knowledge co-production, partnership working and the important contribution that lived experience and different perspectives can bring to the design and articulation of public policy.
- Earlier engagement of a wider set of public agencies would have made the research more visible to partners pre-pandemic and may have generated additional ideas on how to adapt the project to deal with 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 in Liverpool interested in research and engagement.



Leaving a sustainable legacy

- The project reinforced the value of adopting an **asset-based** approach to capture local insight and lived experience to inform public policy-making.
- Covid-19 stopped many of the more creative approaches to community participation that were planned, but the intended model of engagement can be used in the future.
- Despite the difficulties of adapting the research during the pandemic, the engagement team at MyClubmoor developed new skills as a result of participating in the project.
- The final phase of the project has focused on embedding sustainable legacies:
 - Informing a new MyClubmoor Plan to refocus activity in response to Covid-19 recovery.
 - Developing a community-led research toolkit that can be used by communities and public agencies.
- There is a role for Liverpool's People Power Partnership in promoting joint planning and collaboration across public, academic and community organisations to build research skills and capacity to co-produce knowledge for public policy.

