

# Greater Manchester Development Conference

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## Conference Report

Tuesday, 10th September 2019  
Manchester Central

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# Foreword



**Keith Griffiths,**  
Managing Director,  
Built Environment  
Networking

Greater Manchester is booming. That was very much the message resonating around Manchester Central Convention Complex at the 2019 Greater Manchester Development Conference which my team worked hard to organise alongside the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. This was the second year of Built Environment Networking delivering the most comprehensive overview of all major development and investment projects across the 11 constituent areas, intermingled with strong regional influencers such as Andy Burnham, Sir Richard Leese and Rowena Burns.

375 delegates turned up with an appetite to share best practice, reconnect with peers and most importantly explore collaboration opportunities. It was great to see so many of our speakers block out full day's in their diary to interact with our attendees and explore working together.

Placemaking is high up on the Mayor's political agenda and he was at pains to emphasise that any development within Greater Manchester should be delivered sustainably and with the net zero

carbon targets in mind. One of the most obvious things that the rest of the UK can learn from the region is how most of the city's industrial sectors seamlessly work together to deliver growth. Once again, we organised an investors and developer's dinner the night before. 40 blue chip companies and city hall decision makers (including Amazon, Google and Hewlett Packard) got together to discuss the future and set the agenda for the next 12 months. It was a pleasure for me and my colleagues Phil Laycock and Matt Christie to join them and listen to the fascinating insight into the evolution of Greater Manchester.

Built Environment Networking doesn't stand still; conversations have already started on how to take this event to the next level in 2020. Please continue to follow us on social media and visit our website to hear more. Similarly, if you'd like your company to take a more active in participating in the event then I urge you to get in touch with me as soon as possible.

**Until next time,  
Keith**

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# From the Keynotes



Mayor  
Andy Burnham

Mayor of Greater  
Manchester

[@AndyBurnhamGM](#)

Social media has tipped Parliament over the edge, Andy Burnham told the Greater Manchester conference.

The Greater Manchester elected mayor, who was an MP until 2016, said: “It was getting more and more dysfunctional with every year, like an old clock. Social media has disrupted many industries and it’s completely disrupted our political system, which can’t cope.

**“PARLIAMENT JUST ABOUT WORKED BEFORE THE ERA OF SOCIAL MEDIA. AT THAT TIME PEOPLE WOULD WORK OUT POSITIONS ON VARIOUS ISSUES AND THERE WAS A COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT.”**

“Social media means people are taking very individual positions and now Parliament can’t make sense of it all.

One of the reasons that the North has “never punched its weight” in Parliament is because the whipping system forces MPs to vote on party lines rather than for the interests of their regions, he said.

And the current system had resulted in a “really rough deal” for the north while leading



to overheating in London and the south east, Burnham said. “One view of life has always predominated the London view and the civil service has always worked to that principle in terms of how it allocates resources.

“That’s how it has worked, and the Parliamentary system hasn’t looked after all areas equally.

**“CHANGE HAPPENS WHEN BOTH PARTIES TURN BACK WITH ONE VOICE ON THE CIVIL SERVICE”**

he said, expressing his “sadness” that there is little of the “genuine” cross party work that he had undertaken when shadow home secretary with his Conservative opposite number Theresa May on behalf of the Hillsborough disaster victims.

“That’s the exception rather than the rule,” Burnham said.

The “worst thing” is to imagine that the Westminster system is capable of carrying on like now, he said: “Westminster has created the north-south divide so it can’t by definition be the vehicle that will cure it: devolution is the vehicle that will close it.”

But Burnham predicted that the UK is seeing the end of an era during which Britain has become one of the most centralised countries in the OECD

“The voice of the north has got louder.

“Whatever the final decision on Brexit, there has to be a reckoning about how all areas get a fair treatment. That moment is coming and coming quite quickly. The status quo is not doable anymore and Parliament has to give up a lot of its power.

“There is going to have to be a much more substantive policy reform regardless of Brexit. If there is a No Deal Brexit, the need to put confidence into the regional economy will be huge and we are best placed to pick up that challenge immediately.

“My job is to put us in the strongest possible position to benefit when that moment comes.”



And he said that devolution can be a unifying force because whatever ideological standpoint local politicians adopt, they have a shared commitment to their regions.

**“THE ONLY THING IN BRITISH POLITICS THAT UNITES PARTIES AND ACROSS REMAIN AND LEAVE IS THAT EVERYBODY WANTS TO SEE PLACES HAVING MORE CONTROL IN THEIR OWN HANDS: IT’S THE ONE UNIFIER THAT WE HAVE GOT.”**

As an example of the extra powers that should be devolved, Burnham said that Greater Manchester should have full control over its passenger rail network so that it can develop a fully integrated transport system.

Quizzed on a power he would like to have; he picked the London mayor’s ability to keep the roads moving by enforcing civil penalties for blocking yellow box junctions.

When questioned, the mayor defended his decision when first elected mayor to review the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework because of concerns that it would lead to loss of green belt land.

“Over the last two to three decades developers have been going for the easiest sites which happen to be

alongside key motorways and not going to urban and suburban brownfield sites which are a bit more difficult,” he said, adding that this pattern of development had contributed to the decay of the conurbation’s town centres.

“Town centres are no longer the retail opportunities that they once were but are prime opportunities now to develop the higher density affordable housing people are calling for, which is more connected to the public transport infrastructure,” Burnham said, highlighting the launch on the previous day of the Stockport MDC.

He also said that more funding for retrofitting existing housing stock would enable Manchester to move “faster” on its target for the conurbation to be a net zero emissions conurbation by 2038, which would in turn help the UK to achieve its wider 2050 goal.

Burnham said: “Imagine the trade-off there will be. If we move faster, we will make it more likely that the UK will hit 2050.”

And he said that the city’s push to adopt net zero early would equip the city’s young people with low carbon skills, which will be in high demand in the rest of the UK.

# From the Keynotes



**Sir Richard Leese**

Leader, Manchester City Council

[@ManCityCouncil](#)

Greater Manchester’s push to become zero carbon by 2038 is worth pushing ahead with, even though it poses risks for the local economy, the city council’s longstanding leader has said.

Delivering the opening keynote speech at Built Environment Networking’s Greater Manchester Conference, Sir Richard Leese identified the target to hit net zero 12 years ahead of government targets for the UK is one of the “key challenges” facing the conurbation.

**ANYONE WHO IMAGINES BEING LOW CARBON BY 2038 IS GOING TO BE EASY, THEY’RE NOT LIVING IN THE SAME WORLD THAT I AM.**

But adding that he would like to adopt an “even earlier” target, he said: “There are risks to the economy in that, but we want to do it in a way that grows, rather than shrinks the economy. Those are the kind of challenges that Greater Manchester is up for and the sort of challenges that will keep us a leading global city.”

Sir Richard said another challenge is to provide the “right mix of housing, particularly for those on low incomes”. across Manchester.

The conurbation’s sustainable development relies on bringing back into use brownfield sites around its approximately 90 town centres, he said: “We can swallow huge chunks of green belt. Or if we have high quality brown field development around city and town centres, we can create sustainable city region.

**THE QUALITY OF LIFE YOU CAN GET IN ANCOATS CAN BE REPLICATED IN TOWNS ACROSS GREATER MANCHESTER. IF THEY ALL CAN OFFER THAT QUALITY OF LIFE WHAT A CITY REGION WE WOULD HAVE.**

The adoption of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, which was delayed following elected mayor Andy Burnham’s

decision to carry out a review over concerns about encroachment on the green belt, will “help to give certainty” to developers even though it will take another “couple of years”, Sir Richard said.

And he predicted that towns like Altrincham will see the same kind of “really ambitious plans”, like in Stockport, where housing is being brought back into the town centre.

In a progress report on development in Manchester itself, Sir Richard said it on track this to exceed 1.2m sq ft of commercial development, which was last achieved half a decade ago, while the delivery of new homes is “on course to match if not beat” the previous record tally.

But while emphasising the importance of long-term transport plans, like the Northern Powerhouse Rail to upgrade train services across the north, more immediate improvements are important too, he said: “We cannot wait for the investment that we need.”



# The Greater Manchester Strategy

## Panel Members:



**Chair: Phil Laycock**

Director, Built Environment Networking

[@BENetworking](#)



**Rowena Burns**

Chair, Manchester Science Partnerships

[@tweetsbyMSP](#)



**Sir Richard Leese**

Leader, Manchester City Council

[@ManCityCouncil](#)



**Professor Luke Georghiou**

Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, The University of Manchester

[@OfficialUoM](#)



**Lou Cordwell**

Founder, Magnetic North

[@thisismn\\_](#)



**Robin Phillips**

Principal - Internet of Things, Siemens

[@Siemens](#)



**Nicola Headlam**

Head of Northern Powerhouse, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

[@beisgov.uk](#)



**Stephen Wild**

Managing Director, MediaCity, Peel Group

[@MediaCityUK](#)

## COUNCIL LEADER RULES OUT MANCHESTER CONGESTION CHARGE

The leader of Manchester council has ruled out the introduction of a congestion charge in the city for the foreseeable future.

Sir Richard Leese, who championed the city council's unsuccessful attempt to introduce a congestion charge just over a decade ago, rejected a suggestion during the Greater Manchester Strategy session that reviving the controversial levy on motorists is "inevitable." He said:

**IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. FAR FOR BEING INEVITABLE, I CAN'T SEE ANY POLITICIAN GOING ANYWHERE NEAR IT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.**

Instead, the city is focusing on improving its public transport network, Sir Richard said: "We are going for the vast improvement in public transport that we need. The fight is to put in place a London style public transport system where we can integrate bus, light and heavy rail.

"Although walking and cycling are really important, the core of building a non-car dependent city region is having public transport that really works."

Sir Richard also dismissed the idea that regeneration pushes out existing residents by gentrifying neighbourhoods. He said: "One of the things that happened as a consequence of the recession is that large parts of Manchester became substantially depopulated.

"This is not displacing people who are already here but bringing in new people into the city with new skills and abilities." And the council is "very serious" about building an "inclusive economy," he said: "It's also trying to make sure that the existing population have the education and skills and the ability to benefit from the economy we are creating.

Getting a higher proportion of the city's population into employment is a "crucial part" of the council's plans for the city, Sir Richard said: "We don't want the city to be enormously benefit dependent. As far as possible, we want a population that isn't reliant on that safety net.

**IT'S OFTEN DECRIED AS GENTRIFICATION; IT'S ABOUT BUILDING A SELF-SUSTAINING CITY REGION WITH A POPULATION ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.**

Sir Richard, who has been at the centre of Manchester's regeneration since the 1980s said that Manchester had learnt the value of partnerships.

"The public and private sectors learnt that by working together, they could achieve things that they would otherwise not have done and learnt that lesson over and over again."

Greater Manchester's great strength is the highly diverse nature of its economy, he said: "We are the most diverse economy in the UK, a very high-class Jack of all trades."



Sir Richard was backed up by Nicola Headlam, head of the Northern Powerhouse at the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

Pointing to research carried out by former Manchester University planning professor Brian Robson into the regeneration of Hulme, which proved that it had not displaced existing residents. She said:

**HIS WORK IN MANCHESTER REFUTES THE ARGUMENT THAT INVESTMENT IN PROPERTY AND PLACES CHURNS PEOPLE OUT OF A PLACE.**

And efforts to revive town economies cannot be divorced from the regeneration of the wider city region that they sit within, she said: "The best thing for the towns are the continued success of the city region".

"The fear is that we end up trying to do it (regeneration) in slices: we have to work within an economic system of an economy."

Stephen Wild, managing director of MediaCityUK at the Peel Group, said blaming the success of central Manchester for the economic woes of surrounding towns is like pinning the recent demise of Bury Football Club on the city's Premier League sides.

"Not having the knowledge quarter would leave the city in far worse place: those areas are likely to benefit in many ways," he said, giving as an example how industry's growing reliance on digital technology means that manufacturers in the



surrounding conurbation will benefit from the city centre concentration of expertise in this area.

But Professor Luke Georghiou, deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Manchester, expressed concern that rising house prices could undermine Manchester's competitiveness.

**THE WORST THING WOULD BE TO FOLLOW THE PATH OF LONDON AND CAMBRIDGE AND PRICE PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES, WHICH IS A HUGE ADVANTAGE FOR US AT THE MOMENT**

he said. Georghiou also admitted that that it had had to make trade-offs regarding energy efficiency when carrying out its latest developments.

He said: "We have finite resources. If we had made those buildings as carbon neutral as current technology allows, we could have only afforded much smaller buildings and left people in much worse Victorian and 1960s buildings."

Wild urged planners to consider viability issues when ratcheting up environmental building standards. He said: "As a private developer, we have to have an eye to viability. You have to understand how we can deliver. The planning system is setting aspirations, but we need a wider conversation about what is deliverable. We possibly need a wider look at how we achieve that target."

Sir Richard defended Manchester's increasingly demanding residential building guidelines including a requirement that all buildings should be zero carbon by 2028. He said: "We are not capable of doing that at the moment at scale, but we will have to acquire those skills over time."

And the authority is putting its money where its mouth is by installing a heat and power network as part of its Town Hall refurbishment project, he said: "That will allow Manchester Town Hall to be far more environmentally sustainable than could have imagined four to five years ago and allows us to tackle fuel poverty at the same time."

# Placemaking in Greater Manchester

## Panel Members:



**Chair: Phil Laycock**

Director,  
Built Environment  
Networking

[@BENetworking](#)



**Sally MacDonald**

Director, Science &  
Industry Museum

[@sim\\_manchester](#)



**Greg Ball**

Senior Development  
Manager, U+I

[@uandiplc](#)



**Colette Roche**

Chief Operating Officer,  
Manchester United FC

[@ManUtd](#)



**Paul Dennett**

Mayor,  
Salford City Council

[@SalfordCouncil](#)



**Councillor  
Elise Wilson**

Leader,  
Stockport Council

[@StockportMBC](#)

## SALFORD MAYOR URGES MINISTERS TO 'PLAY BALL' WITH NORTH ON FUNDING

The mayor of Salford has urged the government to “play ball” with the north by providing the region with a bigger share of infrastructure funding.

Paul Dennett, who has been directly elected mayor of Salford City Council since 2016, welcomed Boris Johnson’s recent trip to Manchester during the Placemaking session, when the prime minister backed plans for the Northern Powerhouse Rail.

“It’s great that the prime minister visited the Museum of Science and Industry but let’s be realistic we are playing significant catch up in infrastructure investment in the north and Greater Manchester. We have ambition and vision but it’s critical that the government plays ball with us on this.

“This is a post-industrial part of the country and the government needs to play ball through more infrastructure investment.

**WE NEED PROPER DEVOLUTION OF RESOURCES THAT WILL ENABLE US TO REALISE OUR AMBITIONS IN GREATER MANCHESTER.**

Under current government rules, funding for schemes like the housing infrastructure fund is weighted towards high growth areas which tend to be in the south of England.

Dennett said that the £211m worth of cuts that Salford has experienced over recent years had constrained the sums that the council can allot to economic development and regeneration, especially in the context of rising demand for adult social care.

The Labour mayor highlighted the borough’s strategic growth locations. These include the Salford Crescent & University Masterplan, an £800m plan to create a new mixed-use city district containing arts, housing and education.

Others are the corridor leading to Salford Quays, which he said is set to double in size over next ten years and Western Gateway, which is Greater Manchester’s only significant tri-modal port.

These developments, combined with work to rejuvenate the borough’s town centres, aim to deliver 40,000 new homes and 40,000 new jobs by 2040.

“This is just the start of the project. Post-industrial decline decimated this part of the world and in many respects, this is unfinished business for Salford and the city region.

**THE BEST ANTIDOTE TO POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IS GROWTH BUT NOT AT ANY COST.**

Greg Ball, senior development manager at the U+I Group, revealed that the developer is submitting an application this month (September) for the first phase of its plans to regenerate the area surrounding Manchester’s former railway depot at Mayfield.

The masterplan for the project envisages developing around 3 million sq ft of commercial space, 1300 new homes and a 450-bed hotel on the 24-acre site, which is located immediately adjacent to Piccadilly station and the Mancunian Way.

The scheme, which U+I expect to build out over the next 10 to 15 years, will be centred around a five-acre park.

Phase one, a multi-storey car park, and a 71,000 sq ft off building overlooking the new park, is being developed on a speculative basis. Ball said that the application is due to be determined by January next year and start on site in April with completion pencilled in for March 2022.

Stage 2 designs are being worked up for phase 1b, a 220,000 sq ft building. The planning application for the building, which that U&I aims to develop with a pre let, is due to be submitted

next month (October). He said the first building would be targeted at SMEs, while the second is designed to attract a much larger corporate occupier.

Responding to a question pointing out that it is three years since the masterplan was adopted, Ball said.

**THE FIRST PHASE IS ALWAYS THE MOST DIFFICULT ONE TO DELIVER LARGELY DUE TO CHALLENGES AROUND VIABILITY.**

But U+I’s confidence is bolstered by the level of demand in Manchester, he said: “It’s a hugely promising gateway site, which gives us confidence to press the button on the first phase and not rely on pre-lets.”

The shake-up of retail is an opportunity to rethink the role of towns, according to the leader of the council where the first mayoral development corporation (MDC) outside of London was launched last week.

Cllr Elise Wilson, leader of Stockport council, said she is “extremely optimistic and energised” by the £1billion programme of investment which the north west town is seeing.

“The change in retail is an opportunity for us to rethink the role and function of our towns and put them back at the heart of our community by thinking about what people need and want from them.”

She told delegates that the MDC, which is designed to spearhead what she described as “one of the biggest brownfield regeneration projects in the UK” had been officially launched the day before the conference.

The project to create a 130-acre urban village of 3,000 new homes is backed by Homes England and the Mayor of Greater Manchester.

Around 1,000 new homes are due to be delivered within the next three years by the MDC, which is the first to be set up with a town centre. A consultation into the strategic regeneration framework for the site has recently concluded.

Elsewhere in Stockport, Cllr Wilson said work is already under way on phase 2 of the Stockport Exchange project, which is turning a former leisure scheme next to the town’s mainline railway station into offices.

Colette Roche, chief operating officer of Manchester United Football Club, expressed regret at the recent demise of minnow Bury FC.

“It’s very sad what happened at Bolton and Bury but more importantly it was about governance and regulation and making sure that the right tools and skills are being shared. There are things to do but it’s about making sure the focus is in the right place.”

She said, based on Visit Britain figures, which showed that 75% of Chinese and American football fans would travel to the city of their football team even if it isn’t playing, suggesting there are 180m ‘potential’ visitors to Manchester.

Sally MacDonald, director of Manchester’s Science & Industry Museum, said that a new gallery is opening in October which has been designed by Carmody Groarke.

She said that the new gallery sets a high benchmark for future new developments at the museum including the new Power Hall, which will reopen in 2021, turning currently gated areas into public spaces and replacing its existing roof.



# Investing in Infrastructure

## Panel Members:



**Chair: Phil Laycock**

Director, Built Environment Networking  
@BENetworking



**Rosslyn Colderly**

Director for the North, Sustrans  
@sustrans



**Simon Warburton**

Transport Strategy Director, Transport for Greater Manchester  
@OfficialTfGM



**Peter Emery**

Chief Executive, Electricity North West  
@ElectricityNW



**Pauline Johnston**

Director, Station South  
@stationsouth



**Liam Brooker**

Phase 2b Project Sponsor, HS2 Ltd  
@HS2Ltd



**Jo Harrison**

Asset Management Director, United Utilities  
@unitedutilities

## MANCHESTER TRANSPORT PLANNERS INVESTIGATING UNDERGROUND RAILWAY

Manchester transport planners are exploring creating an underground railway in the city centre in order to relieve its growing congestion problems, the conference's Infrastructure session heard.

Simon Warburton, transport strategy director at Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), said that early next year will see the opening the latest phase of the Metrolink tram network to Trafford Park.

Longer term plans include further extensions of the Metrolink as part of a fully integrated rail and tram network, Warburton said.

TfGM is also establishing new "quality" bus routes between Greater Manchester's town centres, which he said marked the first steps to securing improved levels of orbital connectivity across the conurbation. He said:

**WE ARE LOOKING AT HOW TO GIVE THE RIGHT CAPACITY TO THE SYSTEM THROUGH THE CITY CENTRE INCLUDING THE CASE FOR TUNNELLED CAPACITY OVER THE LONGER TERM.**

The authority is "very clear" about the need to integrate the planning of new development and transport, he said: "There is a real opportunity to think about the pace we are able to bring forward housing developments on sustainable corridors so that at the outset we can bring forward the investment case for a sustainable transport solution and embed good sustainable transport principles early."

Warburton also told delegates that TfGM is preparing to respond to a consultation being carried out by Manchester's night-time commissioner into the city's late-night transport provision.

But laying on night buses posed financial challenges in Manchester, Warburton said: "Night buses are crucial but cost money. Historically they've not tended to be particularly well used but we would genuinely like to be able to promote night bus services."

**THE CHALLENGE IS WHERE TO FIND ADDITIONAL REVENUE TO SUPPORT TYPES OF TRANSPORT SERVICE WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE.**



Liam Brooker, phase 2B senior sponsor of HS2, said the Manchester leg of the high-speed rail project must be developed before Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) because much of the infrastructure will be shared by the two lines.

As an example, the tunnel that will be driven underneath Manchester to accommodate HS2 will also be used by NPR, he said: "I don't think NPR can be built first in that the two networks are inter-linked. We are trying to get the best value out of the investment in HS2."

"You can't separate them out because it's a constellation of projects that come together."

**IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT US: HS2 CAN'T STAND ALONE. IT CAN'T BE HS2 OR NPR, WE NEED BOTH.**

And submitting the hybrid Bill for phase 2B to Parliament in mid-2020 will allow much as possible of NPR to be included in HS2's plans, he said.

Peter Emery, chief executive of Electricity North West, told delegates that the region's electricity grid can absorb up to 500,000 new electric vehicles without an upgrade.

"The pace of deployment (of EVs) is increasing in our patch but we can cope with up to half a million before we hit constraints."

But while heavy investment will be required to upgrade the city's electricity network, initiatives like ENW's Smart Street voltage management pilot project could cut consumers' bills by about £100 a year, he said: "We are indifferent to whether the electricity load goes up or down and we are happy to take out load when not required."

Commenting on the August 9th blackout, which plunged hundreds of thousands of households into darkness last month, Emery questioned whether a big increase in back up capacity is required.

**WE'VE HAD A 20-MINUTE POWER CUT IN TEN YEARS AND STILL THE POLITICIANS SAY THAT'S UNACCEPTABLE. WE DON'T MIND GOING DOWN A ZERO-RISK ROUTE BUT THERE ARE COSTS.**

Jo Harrison, asset management director at United Utilities, said renovation of the Haweswater aqueduct is the "cornerstone" of the north west water supplier's plans over the next five years for Manchester.

Built in the 1930s and 1950s, the aqueduct continues to supply a large proportion of Greater Manchester's water supply from a reservoir in the Lake District.



She said: "It's deteriorated quite significantly over the past 20 to 30 years so a major project to renovate the aqueduct to ensure resilient water supplies for Manchester is going forward."

She also said that the company's five-year business plan, which is awaiting sign off by Ofwat, also includes a major project to improve the Glaze and Irwell rivers over the next ten to 15 years.

A key priority for the company is educating customers about the needs for water efficiency, Harrison said: "The vast majority of wastewater infrastructure problems are caused by wet wipes and fats and greases being flushed down sewers. We need to ensure that people are making use of precious resource."

Pauline Johnston, project manager of the Station South project in the Manchester suburb of Levenshulme, said it should be finished by 2020.

The project to revamp a closed Victorian railway station, which was submitted by Manchester city council on behalf of the local community, features a cycle café, urban garden and community co-working and active travel hub.

# The People of Greater Manchester

## Panel Members:



**Chair: Tim News**

Chief Executive, MIDAS  
@MIDAS\_CEO



**Nic Hutchins**

Principal Skills Manager, Greater Manchester Combined Authority  
@greatermcra



**Sheona Southern**

Managing Director, Marketing Manchester  
@marketing\_mcr



**David Keigher**

UK Public Sector, Hewlett Packard Enterprise  
@HPE



**Tony Bannon**

Managing Director, PTG Holroyd  
@PTGHolroyd



**Marion King**

Director of Payments, NatWest  
@NatWestComm

## PUSH FOR ADVANCED MACHINERY INSTITUTE IN NORTH WEST

A venerable Rochdale precision tool manufacturer is leading efforts to set up a new Institute for Advanced Machinery in the north west.

Tony Bannon, CEO of PTG Holroyd, told the People session at the Greater Manchester conference that the company is preparing a bid to set up the institute with support from the Rochdale Development Agency.

Academics from the universities of Salford and Huddersfield are also involved in setting up the institute, which will support research and development and training in the advanced machinery sector, he said: "If we get it in the north west it will be of crucial value to our economy."

The 158-year old company faces intense competition for staff, Bannon said:

**THERE ARE FEW OTHER FIRMS LIKE OURS LEFT SO WE CAN'T GO FISHING IN SOMEBODY'S POOL AND HAVE TO DEVELOP OUR OWN OR FIND PEOPLE WITH TRANSFERABLE SKILLS.**

"One of the risks we have is that we have such good people that they become very attractive to recruiters," he said, adding that the company faces competition from other industries beyond advanced machinery.

Salaries have increased much faster than the national average, Bannon said, with new recruits typically commanding

salaries 15 to 20% higher than those they replace.

Nic Hutchins, principal skills manager (apprenticeships) at Greater Manchester Combined Authority, told delegates that Brexit could potentially compound skills shortages given there are 2.1 million EU workers in the UK. He said:

**THIS INCREASES THE IMPORTANCE OF ENSURING WE ARE TRAINING AND DEVELOPING THE SKILLS NEEDED TO COMPETE GLOBALLY**

But this pressure on skills makes it more important to tap existing under-used pools of labour, he said: "Despite long periods of growth, we still have significant numbers of people unemployed and suffering from ill-health."

Marion King, director of payments at NatWest, told the session that regional cities used to be where organisations had put back office functions into like HR and finance.

But now she said that Manchester, blessed by its good transport connections that include a host of motorway junctions, has become the bank's main hub for digital development.



# A view from PLACEMARQUE+

## #STAYALITTLELONGER: HOW GOOD WAYFINDING DRIVES INWARD INVESTMENT

One of the sessions at Built Environment Network's Greater Manchester Development Conference explores inward investment: encouraging people to spend money in a location. This is a frequent objective for Placemarque when designing a wayfinding strategy. Good wayfinding encourages people to stay a little longer or walk a little further in order to spend their time and money in a different space, perhaps, in a different way.

At the conference our team ask attendees about their route from to Manchester city centre to the conference venue. We ask why they chose that route, and about any stops they made.

Did they buy a coffee, a paper, a vaper?

Did they choose to walk or cycle past the historic town hall or central library or the inspiring statue of Emmeline Pankhurst or the emotive Peterloo Memorial?

Interestingly, nobody made a shopping stop despite 70% of respondees having walked or cycled to the venue. Attendees familiar with Manchester were relatively adventurous, taking side streets, rather than heavily trafficked roads. Surprisingly attendees arriving into Victoria chose to walk rather than to connect to a tram. We had assumed that they may consider the walk of almost a mile to be too far.

And of course, those arriving by car arrived right at the conference door. Interestingly we found them to be embarrassed about their choice of transport.

Good wayfinding has a role in encouraging people to walk by showing options which make a walk more interesting or more manageable as well as more productive.

We did both in Leicester by showing stop-off spaces: identifying parks on our wayfinding, and naming these parks to give them a personality. Leicester is similar to Manchester in terms of it being an urban hub. Our wayfinding reminded residents that there are green spaces amid the sprawl.

We also wanted to show visitors that there's more to Leicester than a football team. We created a walking route to the space centre with periodic wayfinding to identify places to pause and perhaps spend money, to reassure them that they're on the right route and maintain the excitement.

Improvements to public realm –including wayfinding – have an enormous impact by unlocking the powerful pedestrian pound. A 2018 study by Just Economics attributes a £10 million investment in pedestrian-friendly measures in Stoke-on-Trent to a 30% increase in footfall. Similar public realm investments resulted in footfall increases of 25% in Coventry and 35% in Sheffield. Let's see if our research at the conference mirrors this.

Sometimes, though, we might want to encourage people to spend their time differently. The wayfinding in bioscience business centre Alderley Park encourages staff to enjoy a lunch time walk in some of the 400 acres of historic parkland. Just like town planners, employers want to encourage people to come back and investing in staff retention, particularly in competitive industries is smart thinking.

By Sue Manley, Director

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3890/pedestrian-pound-2018.pdf>





# Driving Inward Investment Through Development

## Panel Members:



**Chair:**  
**Shelagh McNerney**  
Independent Consultant  
@ShelaghLtd



**Catherine Dewar**  
Head of North West England, Historic England  
@HistoricEngland



**Howard Lord**  
Development Director, CERT Property  
@CERT\_property



**Tim Newns**  
Chief Executive, MIDAS  
@MIDAS\_CEO



**Rodger Till**  
Director of Acquisitions, High Street Residential  
@highstreetgroup



**Guy Nixon**  
Founder, Native

## PRIVATE RENTED DEVELOPER TO OPEN UP MANCHESTER OFFICE

The private rented sector market in Manchester city centre is still strong despite jitters that there is an over-supply of such accommodation, a developer told the conference's Inward Investment session.

Rodger Till, director of acquisitions at High Street Residential, said while there are worries about the Manchester city centre housing market, investors still want to invest there.

"We have confidence that we can do more here," he said, adding that the firm is opening a new office in the city.

Till was backed up by Guy Nixon, founder of developer Native, who has just opened the redeveloped Ducie Street Apartments near Piccadilly station. He said:

**WHEN THERE IS TALK ABOUT POTENTIAL OVER SUPPLY, PERSONALLY I DON'T THINK THAT THE CASE AT ALL: THE PACE OF GROWTH HAS STRUGGLED TO KEEP UP WITH DEMAND.**

Till said that Hadrian Tower, High Street Residential's showpiece project in Newcastle, is due to complete this time next year.

The scheme to construct the city's tallest apartment block, which boasts a Laurent Perrier champagne lounge on the top floor, is on schedule and sold up to its eleventh floor.

He also said the company's scheme to build 139 flats in Milton Keynes for the Grainger Trust is due to be completed later this year.

And the company has exchanged contracts on the site of its first scheme in Greater Manchester, which will be located in Salford, till said.

Till was also bullish that a private rented sector market for older people will develop.

**PRS FOR OLDER PEOPLE IS GOING TO COME BECAUSE THERE IS MONEY OUT THERE. AT THE MOMENT, A LOT OF OLDER PEOPLE ARE SITTING ON HOUSES WORTH A LOT OF MONEY.**

Native's Nixon told delegates that he has spotted the "first glimpses" of senior living options being looked at in central Manchester, which he said is an attractive option for retirees seeking easy to the city's cultural offer.

But the PRS market for older people has not taken off yet, he said: "We've not yet nailed the product that will tap into that pent-up demand for senior living."

Nixon showcased Native's Ducie Street scheme to refurbish a former cotton warehouse.

The company has spent £25m on the project, which has taken two and a half years to complete.

The scheme was designed by architects Archer Humphryes, which has recently carried out the conversion of the London borough of Camden's former HQ at King's Cross into the new Standard Hotel.

Bistrotheque, the operator of the Ace Hotel, has signed up 15,000 sq ft where it will operate a cinema, restaurant, café and event space in its first venture outside of London.

And Blok which is also embarking on its foray outside of the capital, will take space for its fitness classes-based offer.

Catherine Dewar, head of north west England at Historic

England, said that the heritage quango is on the verge of announcing the locations to be shortlisted for its High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative.

Around 200 initial expressions of interest have been submitted across England for the projects, which will follow the same format as its existing Heritage Action Zones.

She highlighted the zone in Rochdale, where HE is working with the local authority and other partners to help revitalise Drake Street, which forms the main route from the train station into the town centre.

Howard Lord, managing director of CERT Property, said the Manchester-based developer is looking for a design and contractor team for its Cheshire cheese, and Copperworks developments which are located in, Ancoats and Blackfriars respectively.

He said that the company's Kinetic project, an office to residential conversion, is under construction in Old Trafford.



The scheme had been presold to investors, Lord said: "This enabled delivery of a development in an area that hadn't quite taken off when we invested there."



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# BE Greater Manchester Development Conference

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