

# GM Green & Blue Spaces Action Network



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ITEM 07





# About us

Sow the City is a Manchester-based social enterprise, established in 2009.

Established with a few packets of seeds and some compost, we're now a team of 9...

We are on a mission to create greener cities and connect people with nature.

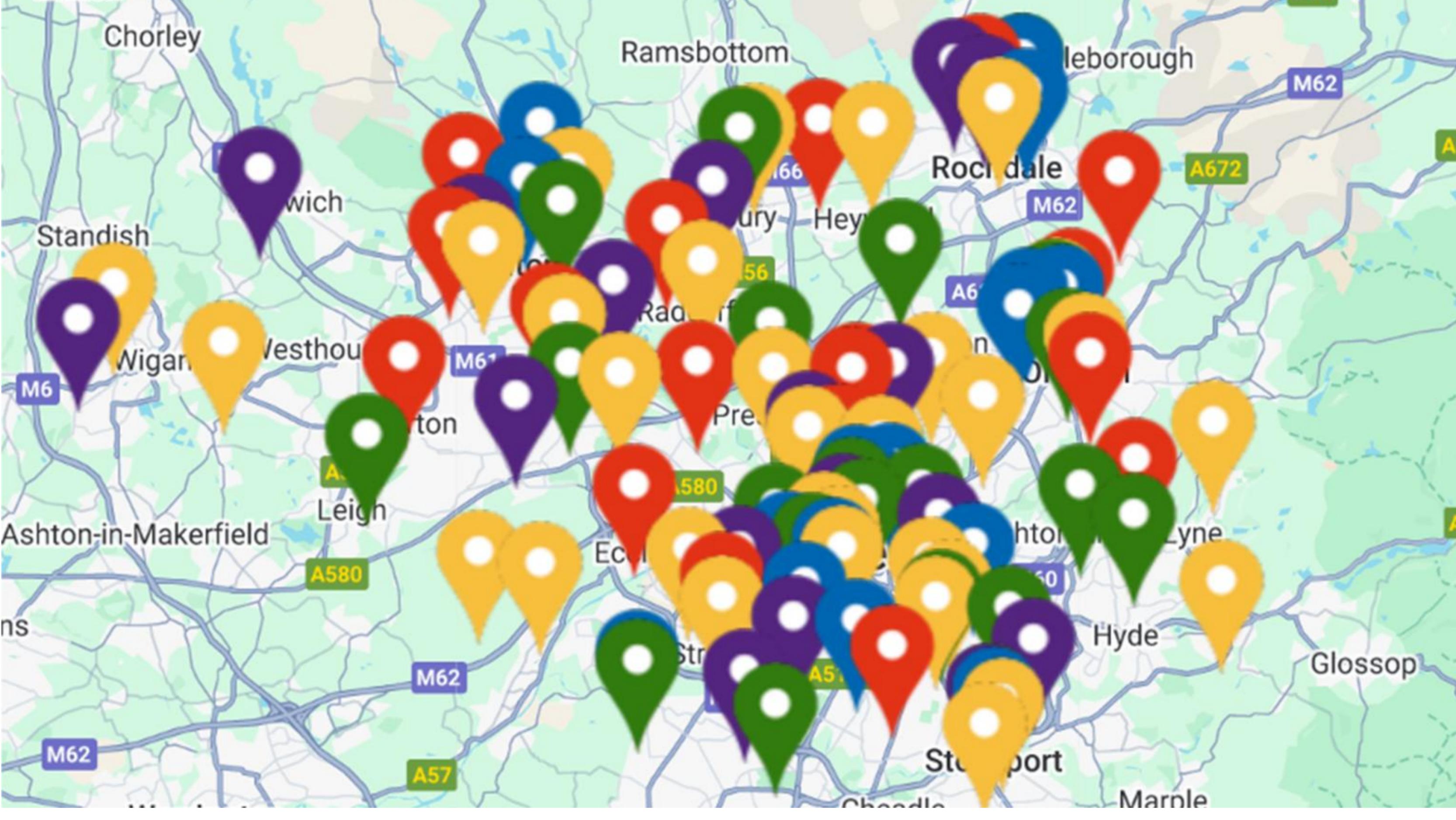
Kieron, Hafsa plus wider team.

# New green space where it's needed most



Not everyone has equal access to quality green space - got an idea for a community project that could help?

Apply for Green Spaces Fund support at:  
[gmenvfund.org/green-spaces-fund](http://gmenvfund.org/green-spaces-fund)



# Background

growing  
mcr



## Nature Neighbourhoods

Supported by



# Group quote

*With Newton Heath being one of Manchester's most deprived areas, **Nature Neighbourhoods** has given us the opportunity to create something wonderful. A chance to try and change people's mindsets on sustainable living and bringing nature back into our ward. **We want to create a community garden space that is accessible, inclusive and eco-friendly.** A place for others like ourselves to feel comfortable and safe in an area that lacks security. **We have been networking amongst other community gardens in the whole of Manchester** who are willing to offer their expertise and advice when we get things set up. **We are excited to see what the future holds and it's a huge thanks to this project.***

**Kelly Robinson, founder of Easy Come Easy Grow**



## GM HAN

- Purpose - Network to share and learn
- Systems change focus
- Task Groups - learning, support, delivery
- Governance - Co-ordination Groups, Task Groups, Programme Board. Link to Locality Partnerships.
- July meeting focus on Women's Homelessness
- Opportunities for influencing change

## Business Network

- Training (public speaking and carbon literacy)
- Elevate Network - topics/ themes. Business a force for good (sustainability, innovation and community).
- Running Northern Sustainability Summit
- Cross Sector

## Manifesto Delivery Group

- GM Network Connect - Link to Programme Board
- Focus on Mayoral Manifesto Commitments - how they connect

## GM FSAN

- Food Security Action Network
- Task Forces - Holiday Hunger+FSM, Increase Healthy Start Uptake, Financial Inclusion, Food Sustainability
- Co-Chairs cross sector
- Quarterly meetings - 70+ attend
- Ian Rutherford Chair
- No paid role - PSR Team support

## VCFSE

- Greater Manchester VCSE Leadership Group and the VCSE GM Accord.
- GM VCSE Manifesto 2024-28 - the sectors voice in devolution
- Connect into commissioning, pop health, data and intelligence, mental health.

## Equalities Panels

- 8 Panels with Lived Experience different themes
- 20 people on each panel - give one mechanism for engagement
- Protected characteristics
- All volunteer members

## GM Moving

A movement for moving  
Enable active lives for all  
No active delivery - local level delivery  
Where do we get more 'pointy' - be in more spaces?

## Live Well

- Movement building - coalition of the willing.
- Community Powered Wellbeing
- Events Feb, May, October, Feb
- How do people identify their role in Live Well?

## GM GBSAN



# Aim

The aim of the 'Green and Blue Spaces Action Network' is to **provide a network of groups and organisations that are interested in green and blue spaces across GM**, with area based and thematic areas of focus such as health, food and urban greening.

The network will share best practice, identify common goals and develop new projects and action for how to create new / improve existing green and blue spaces and connect people with them.

The network will **harness the huge grassroots energy for improving the natural environment.**

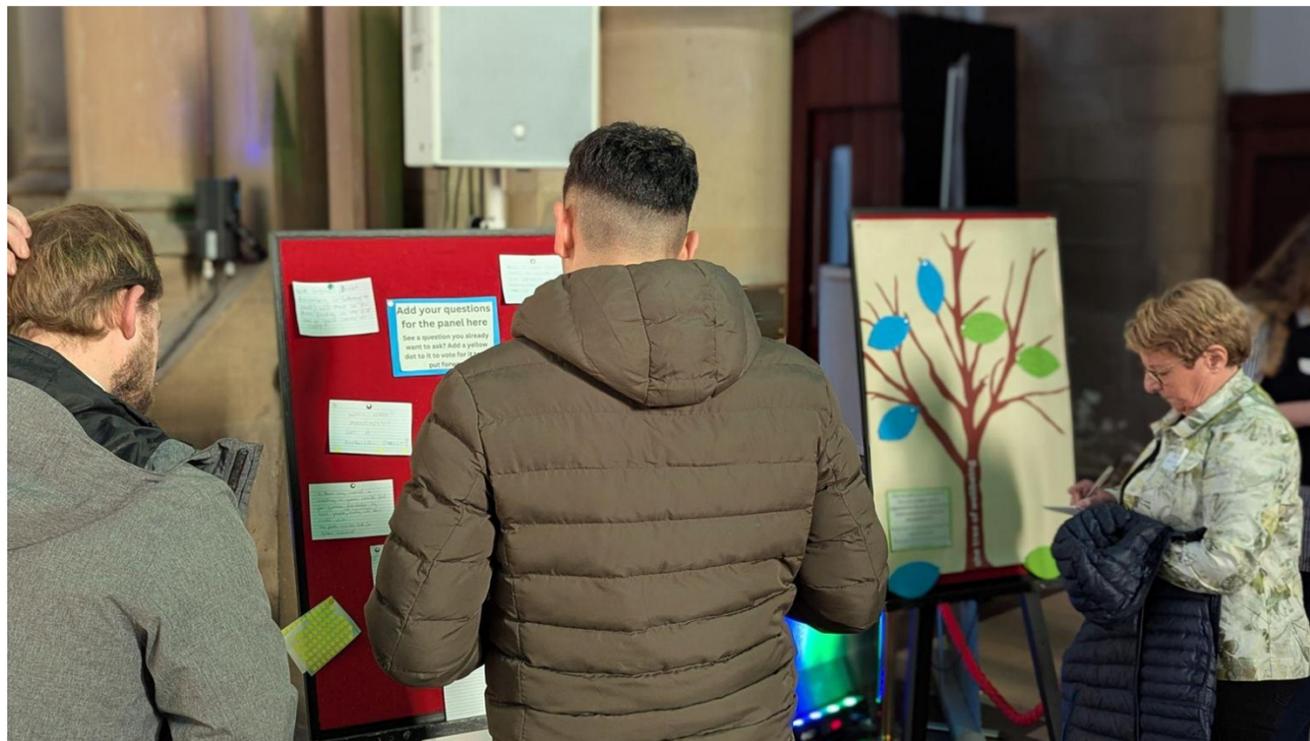


# 5 ways to wellbeing



## GM Strategy Key Goals & Actions

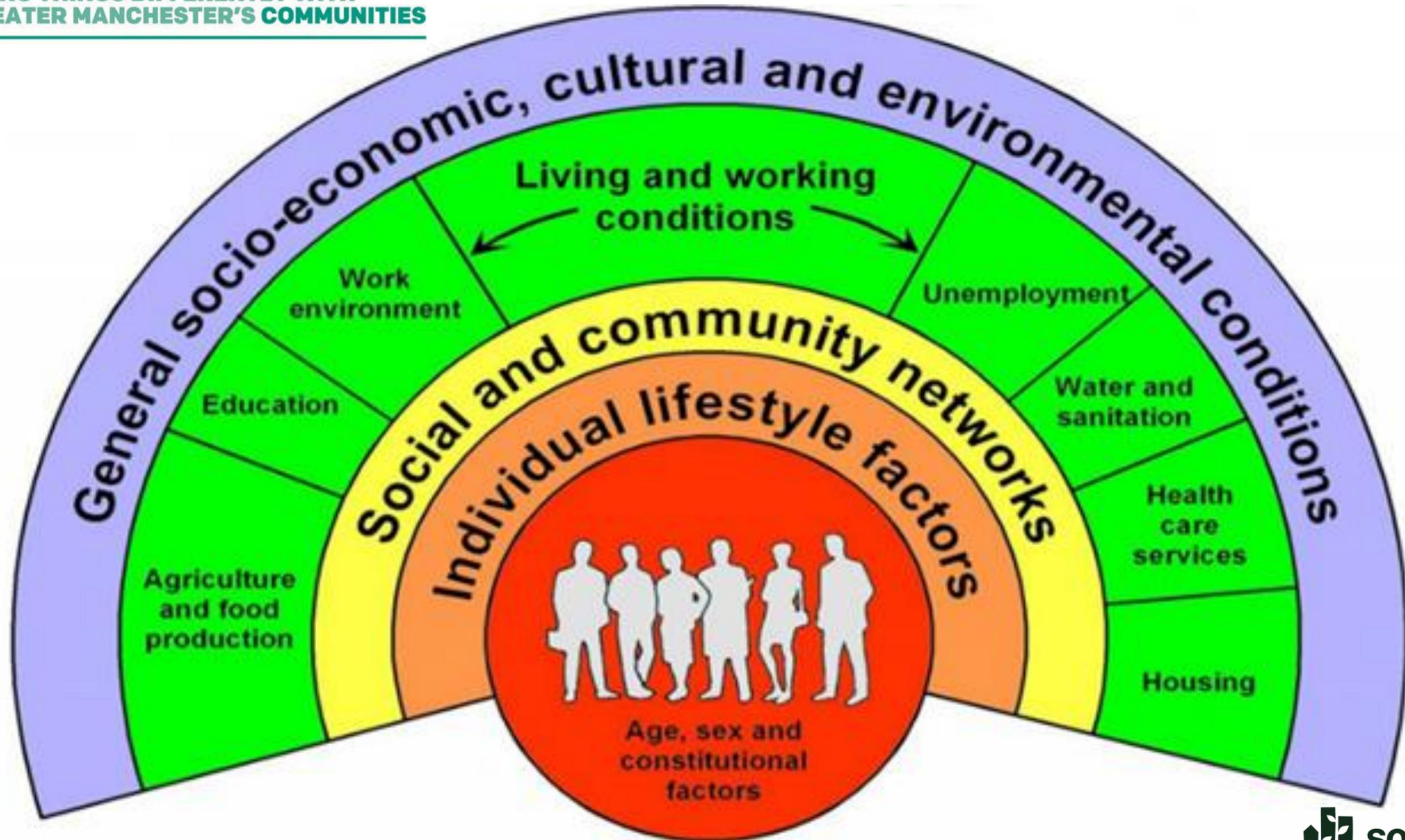
- **Economy:** Boost productivity, attract investment, support business growth (especially in key sectors like AI, green tech), and improve skills through initiatives like the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (GM Baccalaureate).
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Provide community-based support (Live Well hubs) to tackle issues like debt, housing, and health proactively, reducing inequalities.
- **Environment:** Achieve net-zero carbon by 2038 through green growth, sustainable design, and climate resilience.
- **Infrastructure:** Develop an integrated, accessible, green public transport system and digital infrastructure.





# LIVE WELL

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY WITH  
GREATER MANCHESTER'S COMMUNITIES



# The network so far...

260 attendees  
over 3 events

244 participants  
signed up to  
the network

Approx. 50:50  
split between  
community  
organisations &  
professionals

## GM Green & Blue Spaces Action Network

The aim of GM GBSAN is to provide a network of organisations that are interested in green and blue spaces across Greater Manchester, with area based and thematic areas of focus such as health, food and urban greening. Launched in March 2025, we hope to continuously run quarterly events to keep the momentum of the network going.

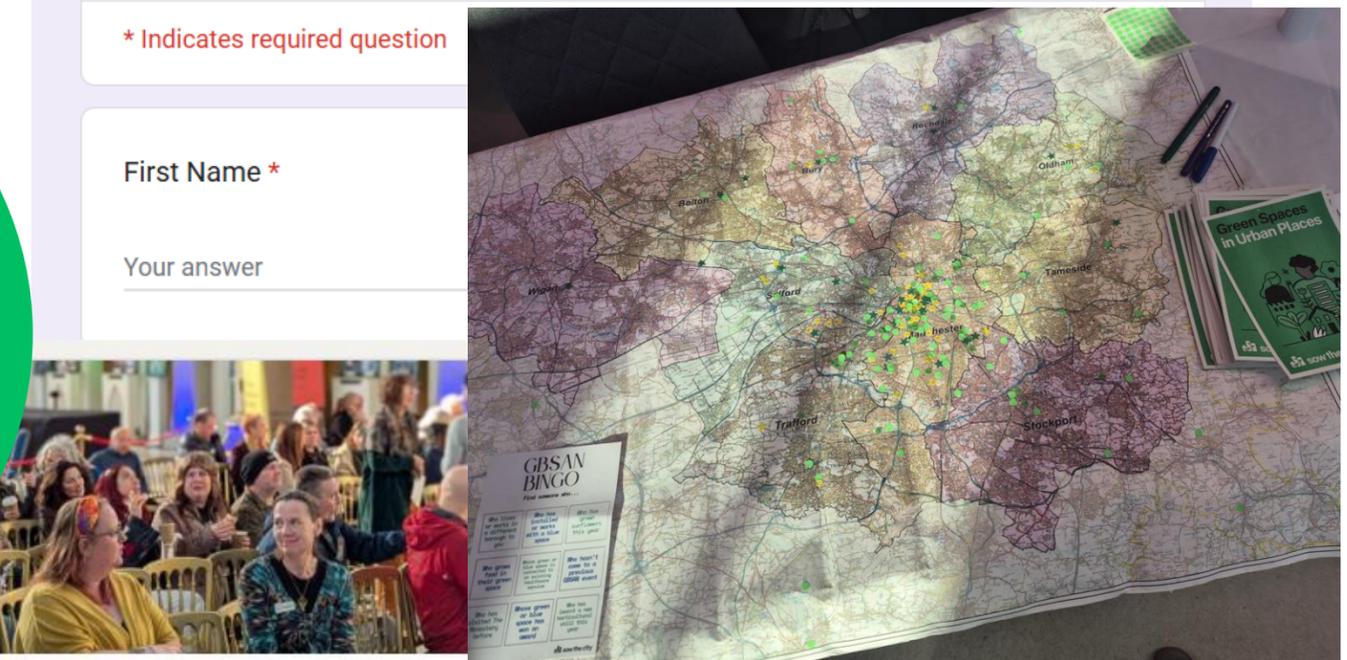
This is a network to be shaped by everyone who has joined however it is currently organised and facilitated by Sow the City with funding received from the Wates Foundation.

Fill in the form below if you wish to be added to the mailing list to hear about upcoming events. Should you wish to leave the mailing list at any point you can email [hafsa@sowthecity.org](mailto:hafsa@sowthecity.org) to have your details removed from the list.

\* Indicates required question

First Name \*

Your answer



Greater Manchester Green & Blue Spaces Action Network (GM GBSAN)

Public group

[Earn an Active Group badge](#)

# Launch Event

March 2025

80 Participants

The event focused on understanding participant expectations, contributions, and desired operational structures, leading to the identification of several key themes and emerging questions to set the topics for future events.



# Summer Event

July 2025

63 Participants

Following the launch event, we found that the most sought after topic was around **Land Ownership**.

For the summer event we centred our event around this theme facilitated a space where participants could share their wins, their struggles and collaboratively create solutions to any barriers they may face when it comes to land ownership for their community spaces.

GM Nature Activity Map



**THE RIGHT TO GROW**  
In the borough of Bury



# Autumn Event

November 2025

117 Participants

With the news of Andy Burnham attending the autumn event it felt apt to centre the network meeting around the connection between green & blue spaces with health & wellbeing tying it into the **GM Live Well** movement.



**LIVE WELL**  
DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY WITH  
GREATER MANCHESTER'S COMMUNITIES





# Future Plans

- Keeping the momentum of the network going with quarterly in-person events
- Organically growing a digital platform for network members to connect with each other in between events
- To engage with more people in the less-represented boroughs (Wigan, Tameside, Rochdale & Bolton)
- Secure more funding
- Continued collaboration of current network partners

**Wates Family**  
ENTERPRISE TRUST



**National Trust**



**Nature Towns  
and Cities**

**THE SIGRID RAUSING TRUST**

 **sow the city**

# How can you help?

- Attendance at events
- Promote the network with your contacts
- LAs in low attendance boroughs to engage local groups more
- Agenda items & talks/presentations (localised)
- Funding
  - Venue (use of local venues) & refreshment costs
  - Project management
  - Overall network or individual events



# Thank you

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