MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE

KYIV SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
URBAN STUDIES AND POSTWAR RECONSTRUCTION

MASTER'S QUALIFICATION THESIS

MANCHESTER'S URBAN TRANSFORMATION (1980S–PRESENT): GOVERNANCE LESSONS FOR UKRAINE'S RECOVERY

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Kyiv
2025

Abstract. This dissertation analyses four urban regeneration projects in Greater Manchester—Salford Quays, Ancoats, the Bee Network/Metrolink, and Mayfield Park—through the lens of governance evolution, institutional memory, political legitimacy, and delivery mechanisms. It examines how governance shifted from centralised, investment-led models to hybrid, locally embedded partnerships. Using qualitative analysis of planning frameworks, policy reports, media discourse, and academic literature, the study highlights key lessons for Ukraine's post-war recovery—particularly the value of public space, the enabling role of local authorities, and the importance of institutional continuity in long-term reconstruction.

Word count: 14989

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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Devolution
 The transfer of powers from central to local or regional government. In the UK context, it enables combined authorities such as GMCA to control transport, housing, and spatial planning.

GM – Greater Manchester
 A metropolitan county in North West England comprising ten local authority areas. In policy contexts, it refers to the city-region governed in part by the GMCA.

GMCA – Greater Manchester Combined Authority
 A devolved regional authority made up of ten Greater Manchester councils. It holds powers over transport, economic development, and strategic planning.

LP – Local Plan
 A statutory land use planning document prepared by local authorities, setting out policies and site allocations to guide development over a 10–15 year horizon.

MCC – Manchester City Council
 The municipal authority for the City of Manchester. A central actor in urban regeneration through its roles as landowner, planning authority, and strategic broker.

NDG – National Design Guide
 A non-binding policy guidance issued by the UK government to encourage high-quality, sustainable, and well-designed development.

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework
 A foundational planning document in England, first published in 2012. It sets out the government's planning priorities and promotes a "presumption in favour of sustainable development."

PfE – Places for Everyone
 The joint development plan for nine of the ten Greater Manchester authorities. It replaces the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) and outlines regional priorities for housing, employment, and infrastructure.

Quango – Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation
 An arm's-length public body, typically funded by government but operationally independent. Often used for delivery or oversight, e.g., UDCs.

SRF – Strategic Regeneration Framework
 A flexible, non-statutory planning tool used by local councils to guide the redevelopment of specific urban areas, often including spatial strategies and design principles.

TfGM – Transport for Greater Manchester
 The transport executive body of GMCA. Responsible for planning and delivering public transport, cycling infrastructure, and the Bee Network.

UDC – Urban Development Corporation

A centrally appointed public agency used in the 1980s–1990s to spearhead regeneration in declining urban areas. UDCs held wide planning powers and operated with limited local accountability.

UDP – Unitary Development Plan

A former form of statutory local plan (pre-2004) used by local authorities to control development. Now largely replaced by Local Plans under newer legislation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban transformation is never just about design or investment. At its core, it's about decisions: who makes them, with what tools, under what constraints—and in whose interests. Since the 1980s, Manchester has often been held up as a success story of post-industrial regeneration. Its skyline has changed, its transport system has expanded, and entire neighbourhoods once marked by decline have been repositioned as spaces of growth. But behind these visible outcomes lies a quieter, more complex story—one about governance. What made regeneration in Manchester possible was not just ambition or investment, but a shift in how urban change was managed. In the wake of industrial collapse and a withdrawal of central state support, the city was forced to adapt. Starting in the 1980s, and accelerating through the 1990s and 2000s, Manchester developed a set of governance strategies that relied on partnerships, pragmatism, and long-term planning. National legislation such as the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*, policy frameworks like the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, and instruments like the *National Design Code* provided both the legal scaffolding and spatial vision within which local authorities operated. These documents shaped what could be built, how, and by whom. But beyond the policy language, they also influenced institutional behaviour and the political logic of delivery.

This dissertation explores how governance functioned in four major urban projects in Manchester: the regeneration of Salford Quays, the transformation of Ancoats, the development of the Metrolink and Bee Network, and the more recent creation of Mayfield Park. Although these case studies date from the early 2000s onwards, they are not disconnected from the city's earlier shift. Rather, they are the outcome of a foundational transition that began in the 1980s—a move away from centralised, state-driven planning and toward decentralised, negotiated, and partnership-based models of urban delivery. The aim of this research is not to evaluate these projects in terms of success or failure, but to understand *how* they were governed: what mechanisms were used, who was involved, and how national planning policies and local decisions intersected to shape space.

This question is not purely academic, because the challenges of post-war reconstruction for Ukraine go beyond rebuilding physical infrastructure. The country faces a more difficult task: building a functioning, modern planning system capable of coordinating large-scale recovery across deeply damaged and politically complex urban landscapes. While planning documents and spatial tools exist in Ukraine, many are inherited from the Soviet era—updated, amended, and reinterpreted, but not replaced. The lack of coherent national guidance, decentralised funding streams, or tested delivery models creates serious risks: fragmented development, institutional gridlock, and long-term vulnerability. In this context, Manchester's governance experience, while not directly transferable, may still offer critical lessons. It

provides examples of how urban transformation was delivered through policy alignment, multi-level coordination, and adaptive institutional design.

The analytical focus of this dissertation is therefore on the governance mechanisms that enabled Manchester's transformation over the past four decades. It investigates how planning frameworks, national policies, funding systems, and stakeholder relationships came together to shape major urban projects. In doing so, it asks: How have national planning policies and governance structures shaped the delivery of major urban transformation projects in Manchester since the 1980s—and what institutional lessons can inform urban recovery in Ukraine?

This central question is explored through four sub-questions:

1. What governance and delivery models were used across the four selected projects?

2. How did national frameworks like the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*, the *NPPF*, and the *National Design Code* influence decision-making and implementation?

3. What roles did local and national governments, private actors, and planning institutions play?

4. Which elements of UK planning governance are adaptable to Ukraine's post-war urban context, and where do fundamental differences remain?

The structure of the dissertation is as follows. Chapter 2 reviews existing academic and policy literature on urban governance, regeneration, and institutional capacity, with particular attention to the UK context and post-war planning challenges in Ukraine. Chapter 3 presents the methodology, outlining the case study selection, variables, and document-based analysis. Chapters 4 explores the four case studies in detail, each examining the governance structures, policies, and institutional actors involved. Chapter 5 synthesises the findings, compares governance models across cases, and reflects on their applicability to Ukraine. The conclusion offers both a summary of insights and a critical reflection on the limits of institutional transfer.

This research does not claim that Manchester provides a blueprint for Ukraine. The political, economic, and cultural contexts are too different to support direct replication. But what it does suggest is that the way a city manages its transformation—who it empowers, how it balances control and flexibility, and how it aligns national frameworks with local needs—can offer valuable guidance. If Ukraine is to rebuild its cities not just physically, but institutionally, it will need to confront the same fundamental questions Manchester began answering over forty years ago.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Urban Governance and Institutional Change

Urban governance is not simply about planning—it is about how power is structured, distributed, and exercised across scales and institutions. It includes the rules, policies, partnerships, and funding streams that shape what can be built, who benefits, and how strategic decisions are made. Since the 1980s, a growing body of research has examined how governance frameworks in post-industrial cities have evolved in response to shifting economic and political realities. In the UK, the 1980s marked a decisive break from post-war state-led planning toward more entrepreneurial models of urban governance, driven by privatisation, deregulation, and the withdrawal of central government from direct intervention (Imrie and Raco 2003). This shift was not purely economic—it had deep institutional consequences. Local authorities, often stripped of funding and formal powers, became increasingly reliant on partnerships with private actors and quasi-public agencies to deliver regeneration. As Jessop (1998) argued, this was part of a broader transformation toward the "hollowing out" of the nation-state and the emergence of multi-scalar governance, where cities were forced to become more self-reliant, competitive, and market-facing.

Greater Manchester exemplifies this transition. In the absence of formal regional structures after the abolition of the Greater Manchester Council in 1986, local authorities began to form voluntary coalitions, such as the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), to coordinate policy. This was a strategic response to the institutional fragmentation that had long undermined metropolitan governance in the UK (Deas 2014). By the early 2000s, the city-region had re-emerged as a coordinated governance space, culminating in the creation of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in 2011 and the election of a metro mayor in 2017 (Deas 2022). The literature widely acknowledges that Greater Manchester's model reflects a form of "new regionalism", characterised by pragmatism, stable leadership, and the ability to negotiate long-term deals with central government. This model has been praised for its policy continuity and delivery capacity (Ward and Haughton 2018), but it has also faced criticism for favouring economic growth over democratic participation and social equity. For much of its development, the city-region's strategy focused almost exclusively on attracting investment and promoting agglomerative growth, sidelining issues like public accountability or distributive justice (Peck and Ward 2002; Cumbers et al. 2015).

This emphasis on growth-first governance was enabled by the city-region's alignment with national policy trends. Successive governments have encouraged city-regions to adopt devolved models, promising local autonomy while maintaining tight central control over funding and policy parameters (Hoole 2021; MacKinnon et al. 2024). As a result, what appears as local empowerment is often a form of conditional autonomy, where cities like Manchester

operate within narrowly defined constraints imposed by the centre. Despite its limitations, the Manchester model has become a reference point for debates about institutional capacity and urban leadership. For Ukraine, which faces deep challenges around post-Soviet institutional legacies and fragmented planning frameworks, the Manchester experience offers valuable insights—not in terms of direct replication, but in understanding how cities can reconfigure governance structures to deliver long-term transformation.

2.2 National Planning Frameworks and Legal Tools

To understand how regeneration is governed, we must also understand how it is enabled—not just politically, but legally. Planning frameworks shape what is possible long before any design appears on paper. In England, these frameworks have evolved toward flexibility and discretion, creating a system that both empowers and constrains local actors depending on the context and resources at their disposal. The UK operates under a discretionary planning system, which allows for flexibility, negotiation, and context-specific decision-making. Unlike regulatory systems—like those in France or much of continental Europe—the UK does not rely on rigid zoning or codified rules to determine what can be built where. Instead, decisions are made case-by-case, informed by planning policy and subject to local interpretation (Booth 1995). This allows projects to move forward even in the absence of formal land use categories, giving local authorities and developers room to negotiate outcomes such as design changes, community contributions, or affordable housing delivery.

This system has deep historical roots. The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, passed under Clement Attlee's post-war Labour government, was the first to introduce a truly comprehensive approach to land use planning across England and Wales. It was motivated by two converging imperatives: first, the need to control uncoordinated post-war reconstruction and suburban sprawl; second, the ambition to embed planning into the welfare state, ensuring that land development served the public good rather than speculative interests (Cherry 1996; Cullingworth and Nadin 2006). The 1947 Act nationalised development rights, meaning landowners could no longer build as they pleased—planning permission became mandatory for almost all changes in land use. It also introduced the structure of local development plans, giving local authorities the legal responsibility to prepare and enforce them. Yet while the 1947 Act laid the foundations, the system continued to evolve. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, a consolidation of several decades of reform, remains the legal backbone of the UK planning system today. It preserved the discretionary character of the system but clarified procedural aspects around plan-making, enforcement, and appeals. It also reflected the broader shift toward neoliberal governance—with an increasing emphasis on enabling development and attracting investment (Allmendinger and Haughton 2012).

Real direction, however, comes from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), introduced in 2012. The NPPF established a "presumption in favour of sustainable development," aiming to streamline planning decisions, cut through bureaucratic delay, and encourage growth. It also introduced the idea of a plan-led system, wherein development should align with strategic local plans—but only where those plans are up to date and in line with national priorities. The logic of the NPPF reflects a broader neoliberal shift in planning, where development is framed as a public good, and barriers to building—especially housing—are seen as systemic failures. This is not a neutral stance. Government policies such as the New Homes Bonus and the Brownfield Land Release Fund rewarded local authorities for approving development, creating financial incentives for permissiveness over caution. The system nudged councils toward growth, even in the face of local opposition, especially in areas where demand was high and land was scarce.

The National Design Code adds another layer to the planning framework. Released in 2021, it promotes principles of beauty, sustainability, and inclusion, offering visual and design-based guidance to support high-quality placemaking. However, it is non-binding, allowing local authorities the discretion to adopt or adapt it as they see fit. This reinforces the discretionary nature of the UK system: policies set the tone, but implementation remains flexible, shaped by context, precedent, and negotiation (DLUHC 2021). This flexibility has clear benefits. Discretionary systems like the UK's allow for innovation, local adaptation, and phasing. In cities like Manchester, this has enabled regeneration projects like Salford Quays and Ancoats to evolve organically over time, responding to market conditions and shifting priorities. It also facilitates layered partnerships—between developers, planners, councils, and national agencies—without the rigidity or delay often associated with regulatory zoning. This institutional agility has allowed Manchester to sustain long-term regeneration efforts across multiple political and economic cycles (Booth 1995; Allmendinger and Haughton 2012).

However, this flexibility also comes at a cost. Critics argue that it produces inconsistency, opacity, and weak enforcement. Developers with greater legal or financial power may exploit ambiguities in policy, while under-resourced communities or councils struggle to keep up. Discretion often privileges those who already understand the system, potentially masking inequalities in capacity: cities like Manchester are equipped to negotiate; others are not (Cullingworth and Nadin 2006; Hesperger et al. 2019). As a result, planning outcomes may be less about policy than about institutional confidence and individual leadership. For Ukraine, the relevance of the UK model is complex and deeply context-dependent. On paper, Ukraine has a regulatory planning system, inherited from the Soviet tradition: general plans, detailed rules, and a rigid spatial hierarchy. However, in practice, as highlighted by both academic research and local case studies, every successful regeneration project in Ukraine relies not on policy, but on people. It is often the individual initiative of planners, mayors, or developers that

determines whether a project moves forward—not the formal legislative framework (Zile 2023; Applaw 2019; Dulko 2023).

This discrepancy between formal regulations and informal practices has been noted across recent Ukrainian planning literature. The weaknesses of Ukraine's legal and institutional planning architecture, often bypassed in favour of personalised decision-making, mirror what scholars have called a "spontaneous order" rather than structured spatial governance (Applaw 2019). Moreover, the ongoing decentralisation process—particularly since 2014—has exposed deep capacity gaps at the local level (Tandfonline 2024), reinforcing dependence on informal negotiations rather than enforceable standards. In this light, the idea of introducing a discretionary model—such as the one used in England—raises difficult questions. On one hand, the Ukrainian system is already discretionary in practice, albeit without the transparency or structure to make that discretion accountable. On the other hand, what Ukraine arguably needs is not more flexibility, but more predictability and legal coherence. A codified, enforceable planning framework—combined with design codes and clear national standards—could help overcome the dependence on individual actors and prevent regeneration from becoming a personality-driven, unsustainable process.

Whether the UK's model is helpful or harmful thus depends on what is transferred: the mechanisms, or the mindset. A purely discretionary system could amplify existing inequalities in Ukrainian cities. However, a carefully phased adoption of flexible instruments—paired with institutional reforms and legal clarity—could offer a way to move beyond outdated Soviet planning logics without replicating the UK's structural imbalances.

2.3 Delivery Models and Implementation Mechanisms

Delivering urban transformation requires more than plans or frameworks. It depends on the mechanisms through which those plans are implemented—and the institutions capable of holding them together. While governance can often be discussed in abstract terms, the delivery of complex urban projects exposes the practical tensions between ambition, coordination, and capacity. In the UK, this story has evolved over several decades and reflects broader shifts in how cities are expected to function. In the post-industrial period, British cities were pushed to become entrepreneurial actors, competing for investment, rebranding themselves, and forging public-private partnerships to deliver regeneration (Harvey 1989; Peck and Tickell 2002). This shift reframed local government not as a service provider but as a strategic agent in the urban economy. It was no longer about administering existing systems—it was about actively managing change. The language of delivery, investment-readiness, and city marketing became central to how urban development was organised.

At the heart of this transition is a shift toward strategic urban management. As Stoker (1998) and Le Galès (2002) argue, governance in this context means navigating uncertainty,

aligning disparate stakeholders, and creating a sense of direction that can hold over time. Successful delivery is not simply about technical planning—it's about political leadership, institutional trust, and a capacity for sustained coordination. This is where the idea of institutional capacity becomes essential. Healey (1998) described this as the ability of urban governance systems to coordinate action, adapt to complexity, and embed learning across time. It's not just about having the right laws or policies—it's about how actors within the system work together, how problems are interpreted, and whether long-term goals can survive short-term disruptions. Pierre and Peters (2000) similarly emphasise the relational nature of governance: delivery is not a linear process, but one shaped by negotiations, coalitions, and power balances between central and local actors.

Importantly, delivery mechanisms do not operate in a vacuum. They are embedded in wider institutional contexts: legal frameworks, land ownership structures, planning systems, and funding models all shape what is possible. And they are influenced by the depth of institutional memory and the quality of leadership. In cities with fragmented governance or high political turnover, the likelihood of maintaining momentum across complex projects drops significantly. This is especially relevant when projects stretch across electoral cycles, require multi-level coordination, or depend on community trust. UK scholarship has long debated the trade-off between flexibility and accountability in delivery. Clarke and Newman (1997) show how managerialism can enable faster delivery—but also how it risks excluding citizens, weakening transparency, and prioritising performance metrics over equity. These tensions are not easily resolved. They run through the heart of what makes urban regeneration difficult to replicate or standardise.

What the literature makes clear is that urban delivery is not just a procedural challenge—it's a political and institutional one. Models matter. But they only function if institutions can carry them. Without that capacity, mechanisms become empty shells, vulnerable to disruption or capture.

2.4 Urban Governance and Contemporary Challenges in Contemporary Ukraine

The urgency of strengthening Ukraine's planning system has never been more pronounced. As the country begins the long and complex process of rebuilding towns and cities devastated by Russia's full-scale invasion, the question is not only what to rebuild—but how. Recovery isn't just about physical structures; it is about the institutions and governance systems that make rebuilding possible. Without capable local governments, functional planning frameworks, and mechanisms for coordination, even the most well-funded projects can stall or fail. In this context, the relevance of foreign models—such as the governance structures developed in cities like Manchester—grows. But as this section argues, these models can only be meaningful if Ukraine addresses its own institutional weaknesses first.

It is tempting to adopt Western tools: strategic planning, flexible zoning, discretionary frameworks, public-private partnerships. But Ukraine's experience shows that importing mechanisms without reforming institutions can backfire. The UK's discretionary system, for instance, works because it is embedded in a legal culture of accountability and layered institutions capable of holding complexity. In Ukraine, discretion often already exists—but informally. What's missing is clarity, transparency, and trust (Hirt 2015; Hirt and Stanilov 2009). Much of that stems from Ukraine's post-Soviet institutional legacy. The country inherited a highly centralised, top-down system from the Soviet Union, in which spatial development was treated as a technical, rather than political, process. The dominant planning tool remains the *General Plan*—a document often out of date and disconnected from real development needs (Tsenkova 2006). These plans are inflexible, difficult to amend, and rarely accessible to the public. They reflect a static, command-based logic that leaves little room for negotiation, innovation, or participation. As Dulko and Tyminskyi have both argued, the system is not designed to respond to change—it is designed to resist it (Hirt and Stanilov 2009; Nedović-Budić et al. 2006).

At the same time, informality dominates actual planning practice. Despite formal procedures and legal documentation, decisions are often made through negotiation, improvisation, and personal networks. Projects that do succeed tend to rely not on law, but on people: charismatic mayors, well-connected developers, or committed civil servants. When those people leave, the project's momentum often disappears with them. This creates a system in which planning outcomes are deeply dependent on individual actors, not institutional continuity. As a result, even successful projects are hard to replicate elsewhere and nearly impossible to scale nationally. This also means that what appears on paper—a regulatory system—functions in practice as a hyper-discretionary, politicised process (Zile 2023; Hirt 2015). Land ownership remains fragmented, zoning is inconsistently applied, and permitting procedures are vulnerable to manipulation. In this environment, long-term planning becomes difficult, and trust between institutions breaks down. Citizens are left out of decision-making, and local governments operate in a permanent state of improvisation.

Since 2014, however, Ukraine has made serious efforts to change this trajectory. Decentralisation reforms have granted new powers to local authorities (*hromadas*), including responsibilities for spatial planning and local development strategies. Some cities have started to experiment with participatory budgeting, open data tools, and more transparent governance. But many still lack the institutional capacity to take advantage of these powers. They face shortages of trained staff, gaps in technical expertise, and a lack of strategic tools for long-term planning (World Bank 2024). In some cases, decentralisation has simply moved dysfunction from the national to the local level. That said, there are emerging signs of adaptation. Cities like Lviv have begun adopting more strategic approaches to planning and development, often with the support of European funding and external technical partners. Lviv's urban strategy, focus

on "smart specialisation," and more transparent land use policies suggest a shift toward a more coherent and participatory planning culture (UN-Habitat 2024). Other cities, particularly in the west and centre of the country, have shown similar tendencies—albeit in uneven, fragmented ways. For Ukraine, the lesson is clear: recovery is not only about physical reconstruction. It is about building institutional memory, delivery mechanisms, and governance capacity that can survive electoral cycles and personnel turnover. Planning cannot be left to charisma, luck, or workarounds. If tools like those used in the UK—strategic plans, design codes, delivery partnerships—are to be useful, they must be embedded within a stable, rules-based system. Otherwise, they risk becoming just another layer of confusion in an already incoherent process.

And yet, there are emerging signals of change. Cities like Lviv have started to adopt more strategic approaches to urban development, drawing on European funding and external technical support. The city has implemented elements of "smart specialisation," introduced clearer land use policies, and developed urban strategies that go beyond the general plan. These shifts are slow and often fragmented, but they point to the emergence of a new governance culture: one that is more open to public dialogue, inter-sectoral coordination, and long-term thinking. Still, such cases remain exceptions. For Ukraine to move forward in the post-war period, it needs more than just new infrastructure. It needs a new planning culture—one that is rule-based but adaptable, visionary but enforceable, and above all, accountable. Lessons from cities like Manchester may be useful, but only if they are paired with serious institutional reform. Without stable institutions to hold them, even the best tools will break.

3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Analytical Approach and Theoretical Lens

This research approaches urban transformation through the lens of governance and institutional capacity. It is not concerned primarily with the visual or spatial outcomes of regeneration, but with how complex urban projects are delivered—who holds power, how decisions are made, and what mechanisms turn plans into outcomes. Drawing on the literature outlined in Chapter 2, this chapter builds a working analytical framework grounded in urban governance theory, public-private coordination, and post-socialist institutional challenges. At its core, governance here is understood not simply as government action, but as a configuration of actors, policies, and institutions that shape urban change (Pierre and Peters 2000; Healey 1998). This includes state and non-state actors—local councils, developers, delivery agencies, civil society—and how they align (or fail to align) around shared goals. It also includes the rules, tools, and informal practices through which this alignment is negotiated.

The theoretical framing draws on concepts of multi-level governance, where urban delivery is shaped by interactions between local, regional, and national authorities (Jessop 1998; Hooghe and Marks 2003). It also incorporates institutional capacity, defined by Healey

(1998) as the ability of a governance system to mobilise knowledge, coordinate actors, and sustain delivery over time. These lenses are useful in highlighting the institutional variation across the four Manchester case studies and assessing their relevance to Ukraine's post-war recovery.

Another relevant dimension is the debate around state-led versus market-led regeneration. UK urban policy has often oscillated between centralised initiatives (such as Urban Development Corporations in the 1980s) and more recent locally-driven models based on strategic partnerships and planning discretion. Understanding how these models work in practice—particularly in contexts of institutional reform or fragmentation—is essential to assessing their potential relevance beyond the UK, especially in post-socialist or post-conflict settings.

Finally, this research is positioned in response to growing literature on urban recovery in post-conflict environments (UN-Habitat 2022; Tsenkova 2006). While many frameworks exist for rebuilding infrastructure, far fewer focus on building governance capacity. This project takes that gap seriously and focuses on institutional delivery—not just planning as vision, but planning as action.

3.2 Analytical Framework and Key Variables

Based on the governance literature and the empirical goals of this study, the following key variables are used to analyse each case study:

Table 1. Framework for Case Comparison		
Variable	Values	Guiding Questions
Governance Structure	Centralised, devolved, hybrid, private-led	Who were the leading actors? Was governance centralised, devolved, or multi-scalar?
Delivery Mechanism	Urban Development Corporation (UDC), PPP, Council-led, Mayoral initiative, arms-length body	How was the project implemented in practice? Through which delivery model or structure?
Funding Sources	Public (national/local), private, joint venture, grants, developer contributions	What were the main sources of funding? Who took on risk or responsibility for financing?
Policy / Planning Tools	Masterplan, Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF), SPD, Places for Everyone, Local Plan, design code	What planning instruments shaped the project? How formal or discretionary were they?
Stakeholder Alignment	Single-agency led, multi-actor	How were different stakeholders

	coordinated, fragmented, contested	coordinated or involved? Was the city council a lead negotiator?
Regulatory Flexibility	Strict/rule-based, negotiated, discretionary, exceptional planning permissions	To what extent was planning exercised with discretion or flexibility?
Public Legitimacy	Participatory, consultative, top-down, contested	Was the project publicly accepted or challenged? What role did community engagement play?
Media Framing / Public Reception	Celebrated, neutral, contested, politicised, ignored	How was the project represented in media discourse? Was it framed positively, critically, or not at all? How did it shape public understanding or legitimacy?
Strategic Narrative	Various	How was the project framed? What narrative was used to justify or promote it?
Institutional Continuity	High (same leadership or agency over time), moderate (shifted but aligned), low (disruptive turnover)	Was there long-term leadership or memory across phases? Did delivery rely on specific individuals?
Outcome Relevance	Replicable, cautionary, context-specific, transferable with adaptation	What does this case reveal for post-conflict recovery in Ukraine? What lessons or warnings emerge?

Each case is analysed using these categories in a comparative way. The goal is not to evaluate success or failure in simplistic terms, but to understand what governance configurations enabled delivery, and what implications they carry for cities undergoing recovery and reform.

3.3 Methodology

This research is a qualitative, document-based case study examining four major urban projects in Manchester: Salford Quays, Ancoats, the Metrolink and Bee Network, and Mayfield Park. The cases were selected to represent diverse delivery models, timeframes, and project types—from 1980s brownfield regeneration to contemporary transport integration and green infrastructure.

Rather than treating these as isolated developments, the study views them as expressions of Manchester's evolving governance landscape. Each case reveals how urban delivery has been shaped by national policy, local leadership, institutional continuity, and investment strategies.

The primary research method is desk-based document analysis. Source materials include:

- Strategic and spatial planning documents (e.g. SRFs, neighbourhood frameworks, masterplans)
- Local and regional policy texts (e.g. Places for Everyone, Salford Local Plan)
- Institutional publications (e.g. GMCA reports, House of Commons briefings)
- Academic literature on governance, regeneration, and delivery mechanisms
- Media reporting and commentary from outlets such as The Guardian, BBC News, and Manchester Evening News
- Visual materials, including original photographs and spatial mappings compiled by the author during fieldwork in Manchester

These sources were analysed to understand both formal governance tools and the informal dynamics—narratives, stakeholder messaging, and perceptions of legitimacy—that shaped each project's trajectory. Special attention was paid to how institutional memory, regulatory flexibility, and public legitimacy evolved over time. This approach enables a layered comparison across cases, showing not only what tools were used, but how delivery capacity was built and sustained in varying contexts.

There are several limitations. The study does not include interviews or access to internal council records and relies solely on publicly available sources. While on-site visual observations support spatial interpretation, they are illustrative, not ethnographic. Lastly, as a single-city case study, the findings are not intended to be widely generalisable. Instead, they offer transferable insights into governance and institutional capacity that may inform urban recovery in Ukrainian cities.

4. CASE STUDIES ANALYSIS

This chapter presents four case studies that illustrate the evolution of governance and delivery mechanisms in Manchester's urban regeneration from the late twentieth century to the present. These projects were selected because they represent distinct moments in Manchester's institutional development, as well as different types of infrastructure, leadership models, and policy environments. Each case offers insight into how regeneration was made possible—not only through funding or planning tools, but through institutional alignment, leadership, and strategic framing. From the early days of state-led, market-oriented redevelopment in Salford Quays, to the more recent emphasis on green space and equity in Mayfield Park, the cases reflect Manchester's shift toward increasingly layered, flexible, and city-region-driven governance. They also highlight the city's capacity to adapt national policy tools to local contexts.

The analysis draws on the variables established in Chapter 3. Cases are not presented as standalone stories, but as components of a broader governance trajectory.

4.1 Salford Quays

4.1.1 Context

Salford Quays is widely recognised as one of the most emblematic post-industrial regeneration schemes in the UK. Formerly home to the Manchester Docks—once the third busiest port in Britain—the area declined rapidly after the 1970s due to global economic shifts, the rise of containerisation, and the obsolescence of inland shipping. The docks were closed in 1982, triggering large-scale job losses and physical dereliction across Salford's waterfront (Robson 2002, 10; Hall 1997). In response, Salford City Council strategically acquired over 220 acres of docklands using a derelict land grant in 1984, laying the groundwork for public-led intervention in a region suffering the effects of long-term deindustrialisation (Wong and Law 1999, 87). What followed was not merely physical redevelopment but an institutional experiment: Salford Quays became a testing ground for new models of governance, partnership delivery, and investment attraction. The site's transformation—from contaminated dock basins to a mixed-use waterfront of cultural institutions, media infrastructure, housing, and high-end offices (see Figure 1)—helped define Manchester's broader post-1980s regeneration strategy. In many ways, the project prefigured Manchester's distinctive regeneration logic, where institutional innovation mattered as much as physical transformation (Peck and Ward 2002; Tallon 2013).

4.1.2 Governance, Planning Mechanisms

The governance of Salford Quays underwent a profound transformation across its multi-decade redevelopment, reflecting shifts in national urban policy, planning culture, and local institutional capacity (see stakeholder mapping in Figure 2). Initially driven by the Central Manchester Development Corporation (CMDC)—an agency established in 1988 under the Conservative government—the project embodied a centralised, investment-led regime. The CMDC operated with extensive powers granted directly by the central government, allowing it to bypass local planning frameworks, use simplified development zones, and fast-track decision-making to attract private capital (Imrie and Thomas 1999; Deas 2013). While this approach facilitated rapid remediation and infrastructure investment, it sidelined democratic accountability and community participation, with Salford City Council relegated to a peripheral role primarily focused on infrastructure support (Wong and Law 1999, 90).

The planning tools during this initial phase mirrored the governance structure: light-touch, highly discretionary, and geared toward market delivery. The Salford Unitary

Figure 1. Salford Quays today

*Note: Photograph by the author (March 2025)*

Development Plan (UDP) provided a general planning backdrop but had little binding authority over development within the Quays. Scholars have critiqued this early model as one of privatised spatial control, lacking long-term vision or social inclusion (Imrie and Raco 2003).

Following the dissolution of the CMDC in 1996, governance shifted toward a more devolved and hybrid model. Planning powers reverted to Salford City Council, which began integrating the Quays into its wider spatial strategy. This marked the start of a governance transition—from centralised agency to locally anchored public-private coordination. Key milestones included the MediaCityUK Planning Guidance (2006), which introduced structured principles around land use, and public realm design. The Council also took on a growing strategic role in brokering partnerships with developers like Peel Holdings and institutional stakeholders such as the BBC and the University of Salford (Tallon 2013).

This evolution paralleled broader trends in Greater Manchester's urban governance, including the emergence of place-based strategic planning and the formation of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in 2011. From the 2012 onward, planning at Salford Quays increasingly reflected the priorities of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF),

including a presumption in favour of sustainable development (DCLG 2012; DLUHC 2023). This alignment drove a new wave of plan-making—culminating in the Salford Local Plan (2023), which designated Salford Quays and MediaCityUK as core development zones focused on employment density, sustainable transport, and high-quality public realm.

Figure 2. Salford Quays Regeneration Process—Stakeholders
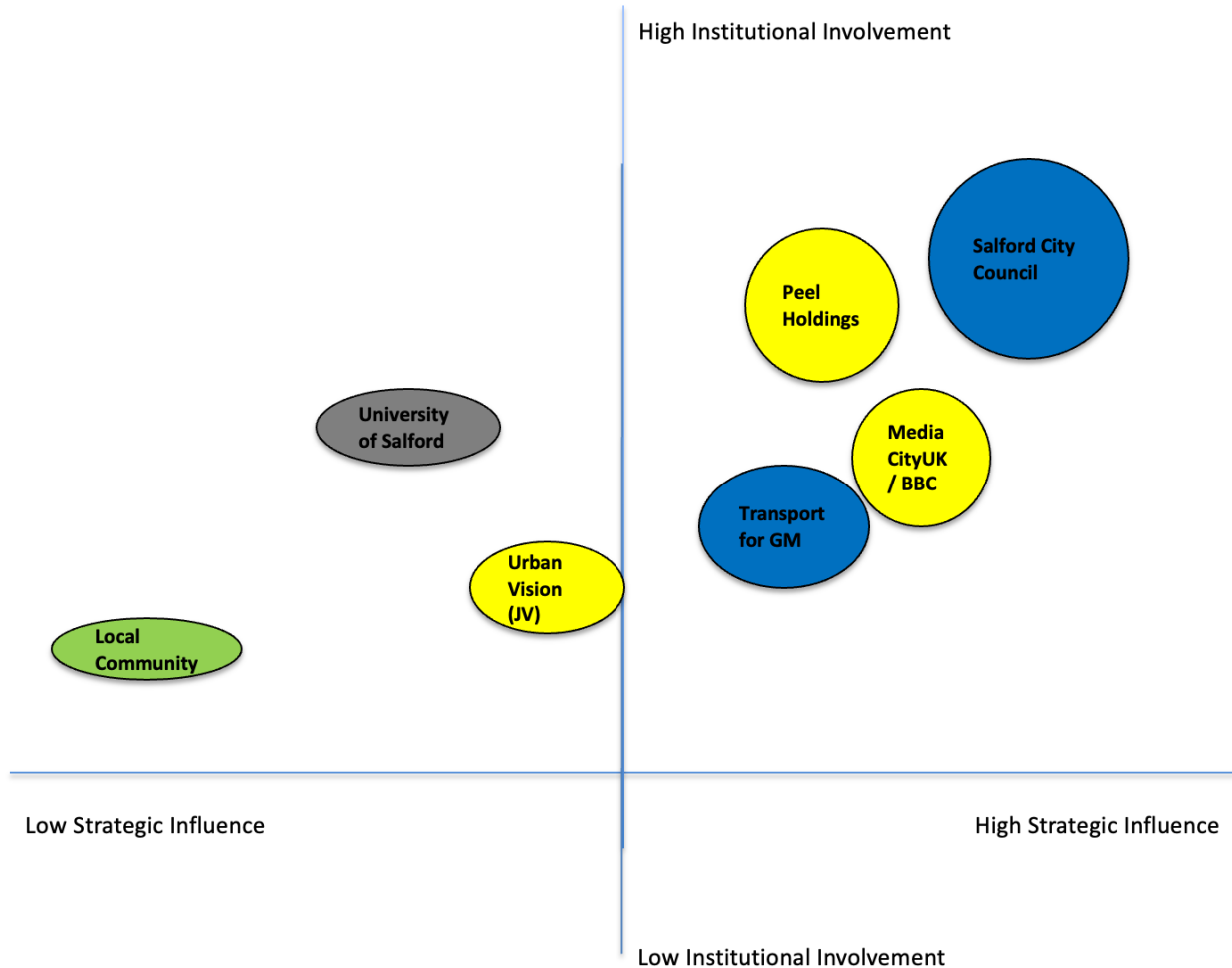
Note: Stakeholder positions reflect their relative strategic influence and institutional involvement in the Salford Quays regeneration process. Blue—government / public bodies; Yellow—developers / private partners; Green— local community and civil society, Grey—anchor institution. Prepared by the author using PowerPoint

Nationally promoted frameworks like the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code (MHCLG 2021) have also influenced design expectations, encouraging walkability, contextual design, and green infrastructure. While these tools are non-binding, their emphasis on place quality has informed both Council expectations and private sector design responses. This is especially visible in recent public realm enhancements, including improved pedestrian infrastructure and landscaping.

Most recently, the Places for Everyone (PfE) joint development plan (2024) embedded Salford Quays within a city-region spatial strategy, recognising the area as a strategic employment hub for creative, cultural, and media industries. It connected the site more explicitly to adjacent growth zones like Trafford Wharfside and Ordsall Riverside—consolidating its position within Greater Manchester's post-industrial urban logic. Stakeholder coordination at Salford Quays evolved in tandem with the area's governance trajectory, gradually shifting from top-down imposition to a more layered and collaborative model. During the CMDC era, coordination was minimal: local democratic structures were bypassed, and community engagement was largely absent, with decisions driven by central government priorities and private investor interests. This led to fragmented development outcomes and limited integration with surrounding communities.

The 2000s marked a turning point. As planning powers returned to Salford City Council, the authority emerged not only as a regulator, but as a strategic convenor—aligning infrastructure delivery, development interests, and long-term spatial vision. Key landowners like Peel Holdings became central partners, especially in the delivery of MediaCityUK, while institutional anchors such as the BBC and the University of Salford brought legitimacy and economic purpose to the regeneration strategy. The Council also worked closely with Urban Vision, its joint venture planning consultancy (in partnership with Capita and Galliford Try), which played a key role in development management and policy implementation until its services were brought back in-house in 2020. The growing role of Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) added further alignment at the regional level, particularly around Metrolink expansion and strategic mobility connections. Meanwhile, national frameworks such as the NPPF and Places for Everyone linked the Quays to wider agendas around employment density, sustainable growth, and innovation-led clustering.

Today, stakeholder dynamics at Salford Quays are embedded in a multi-scalar governance architecture, where local authority leadership is balanced by private sector delivery capacity and public policy direction from regional and national bodies. Though not without tensions, this evolution has created a more coherent, strategically anchored model of development—one that reflects the site's continued importance in Greater Manchester's urban fabric.

4.1.3 Narratives and Legitimacy

From the outset, Salford Quays was framed as a symbol of post-industrial recovery. Politicians and developers frequently portrayed it as the North West's answer to London Docklands—a site of transformation, innovation, and global investment. This narrative was not incidental. As early as the 1990s, promotional materials and news coverage highlighted "The Lowry effect" and later "MediaCityUK" as evidence of "Salford's rebirth" (The Guardian

2013; MediaCityUK 2023). Regional and national media echoed these ambitions, branding the area "the Canary Wharf of the North" (The Guardian 2006).

Yet this image-making concealed deeper tensions around who regeneration was for—and who was left out. Academic critics have long highlighted that Urban Development Corporations (UDCs), including the Central Manchester Development Corporation (CMDC), operated outside local democratic structures and had little obligation to engage with local communities (Imrie and Thomas 1999; Deas 2013). Planning decisions were made with limited transparency, favouring large developers and speculative investment over social infrastructure or affordable housing. In many ways, the CMDC represented the apex of urban entrepreneurialism—a strategy prioritising external capital and flagship architecture over participatory governance (Harvey 1989; Raco 2005).

Figure 3. Spatial Strategy and Public Realm Opportunities—MediaCityUK
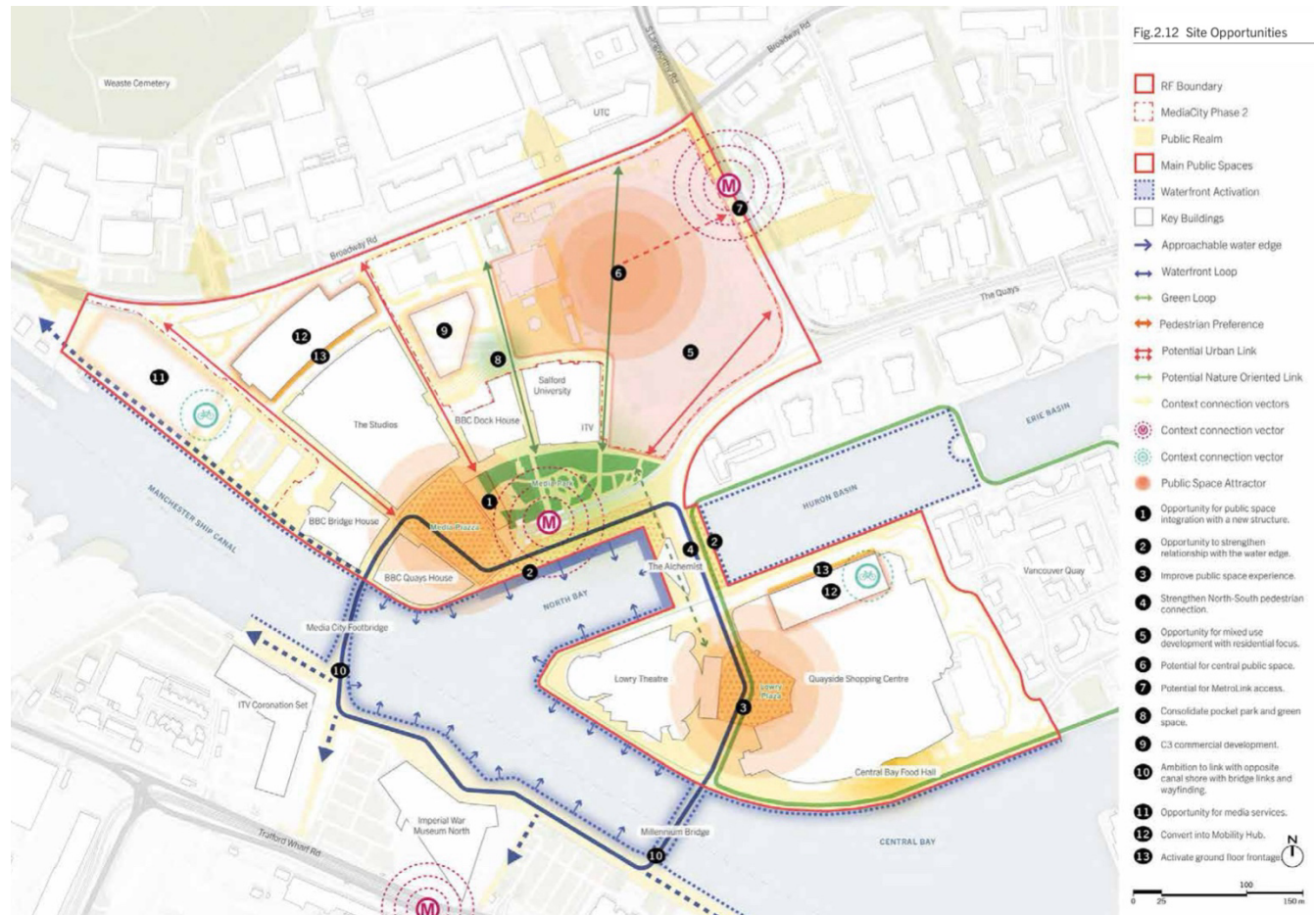
Note: Image reproduced from Quayside Regeneration Framework (published in September, 2023), accessed via Salford City Council Website

This top-down model generated short-term gains but left a democratic vacuum. Early community engagement at Salford Quays was virtually nonexistent, and issues such as local job access, housing affordability, and cultural fit received little attention in the initial phases (Peck and Ward 2002). Critics like Imrie and Raco (2003) warned that such regeneration strategies risked deepening spatial and social inequalities by enabling development without accountability. Over time, however, the governance culture around Salford Quays evolved. Salford City Council gradually reclaimed a strategic role, embedding community consultation processes, coordinating with local stakeholders, and seeking alignment between planning and public interest. While still framed through the language of growth and competitiveness, later stages—particularly those around MediaCityUK and the Irwell River corridor—reflected stronger efforts to balance place marketing with liveability and integration (Tallon 2013).

Institutional memory played a key role here. Unlike other UDC legacy sites that stalled after the quango era, Salford benefited from continuity in leadership and a growing culture of public-private coordination. Key staff within Salford City Council had remained engaged with the project since the late 1990s, and long-term partnerships with actors like Peel Holdings and the BBC allowed for iterative learning. Today, Salford Quays is not only a physical transformation story—it is also an example of how institutional capacity can be slowly rebuilt after a period of centralised, contested governance.

4.1.4 Phasing and Delivery Timeline

The regeneration of Salford Quays advanced through coordinated phases, each marked by distinct investments, spatial interventions, and evolving strategic ambitions. This section outlines what was delivered, when, and how each phase built upon the last to shape one of Greater Manchester's flagship regeneration zones. Regeneration began with Salford City Council's 1984 purchase of over 220 acres, enabling large-scale land remediation, dock decontamination, flood defences, and new access roads. The area was rebranded as "Salford Quays," establishing a new spatial identity.

Initial private investment focused on commercial offices, hotels, and waterfront apartments—including Quay Plaza, Anchorage, and the Copthorne Hotel. Infrastructure works like reopening the Manchester Ship Canal to passenger traffic and enhanced quayside landscaping helped attract leisure and investor interest. By the early 2000s, cultural infrastructure became central. The Lowry (2000) and Imperial War Museum North (2002) positioned the Quays as a cultural destination, supported by new bridges, promenades, and transport links.

The most transformative phase began in 2007 with MediaCityUK. The BBC's relocation (2011), along with ITV and the University of Salford, brought national visibility. Public squares, Metrolink access, and Dock10 further consolidated the area. Recent efforts, as illustrated in Figure 3, have focused on high-density housing, placemaking, and spatial integration through the Salford Local Plan (2023) and Places for Everyone (2024), supported by active travel infrastructure such as the Bee Network.

4.1.5 Case Reflections and Relevance

Salford Quays is more than a successful regeneration project—it is a lens through which to understand the long-term evolution of governance, planning culture, and institutional learning in the UK. As the first major post-industrial waterfront redevelopment in Greater Manchester, it laid the groundwork for future regeneration strategies that blended flexibility, opportunism, and narrative control. In its early phase, the project showcased the capacity of a state-led model to mobilise investment quickly. Yet this came at the cost of democratic accountability and public engagement. The Central Manchester Development Corporation (CMDC), though effective at enabling physical change, was widely criticised for its top-down delivery, developer-first logic, and limited concern for social infrastructure. This tension— between speed and legitimacy—remains relevant for post-war contexts like Ukraine, where state-led delivery may be necessary, but risks alienating local communities if not balanced with transparency and accountability. As governance shifted from the CMDC to Salford City Council, a more grounded and iterative planning culture emerged. Over two decades, the council strengthened its strategic capacity, integrated planning policy with regional frameworks, and increasingly coordinated with anchor stakeholders such as Peel Holdings and the BBC. This evolution illustrates that institutional capacity can be rebuilt, and that local authorities—if given time and autonomy—can become effective brokers of regeneration.

For Ukraine, the Salford Quays case highlights both opportunity and caution. The project underscores the importance of strong institutional anchoring—through spatial plans, national planning frameworks and guidelines, cultural narratives, and long-term partnerships. But it also serves as a warning against over-reliance on centralised, technocratic delivery. Without meaningful public involvement or democratic checks, regeneration can reinforce existing inequalities or create enclaves of growth disconnected from wider urban realities.

4.2 Ancoats

4.2.1 Context

Ancoats, once described as "the world's first industrial suburb," stood at the heart of Manchester's cotton economy—its red-brick mills, canal arms, and grid streets etched into the geography of Britain's industrial revolution. But like so many manufacturing neighbourhoods,

it was left behind. By the 1980s, Ancoats had become a landscape of vacancy and dereliction, fragmented by clearance programmes and decades of municipal neglect (Nevin 2003). The very buildings that once powered the empire were now boarded up, collapsing into themselves. The changes were different from Salford Quays; it wasn't a sweeping, iconic gesture—it was a slow, deliberate process. In 1994, Ancoats was designated a Conservation Area, signalling a shift in how the city understood its value: not just as a problem to be solved, but as a place worth preserving. Later, it was included in the tentative nomination for UNESCO World Heritage Site status as part of Manchester's industrial heritage corridor (ICOMOS UK 2006). These recognitions mattered as reframing devices. They gave the area breathing room, protecting it from speculative erasure and opening the door to something more careful.

Figure 4. Contemporary streetscape of Ancoats, Manchester

Note: Photograph by the author (January 2025)

The first serious step toward regeneration came with the Ancoats Strategic Regeneration Framework (2001), developed by Manchester City Council. It didn't promise glossy skyscrapers or instant transformation. Instead, it laid out a vision rooted in adaptive reuse, walkability, and heritage-led growth (MCC 2001). Over time, that framework evolved. Today, Ancoats is regularly described as one of the most liveable neighbourhoods in the UK, and the evidence of this can be seen just by walking through the streets of Ancoats (see Figure 4). It's won awards for design and street life. It features in glossy property brochures and cultural guides. But behind the headlines lies a slower, layered story that reminds us that regeneration

doesn't always come from spectacle. Sometimes it comes from long memory, political patience, and the belief that place matters even when profit isn't guaranteed.

*4.2.2 Governance, Planning Mechanisms*

The regeneration of Ancoats exemplifies how locally driven governance and nuanced planning tools can shape long-term urban transformation. Unlike projects led by national quangos or private master developers, Ancoats was stewarded by Manchester City Council (MCC), whose consistent involvement underpinned the project's adaptive, heritage-led trajectory (Couch et al. 2011; Peel 2016). From the outset, MCC signalled a cautious, iterative approach by designating Ancoats a Conservation Area in 1994. This status became a critical planning instrument: it constrained demolition, encouraged adaptive reuse of industrial buildings, and enforced design standards sympathetic to the area's historic grain (Historic England 2015). It enabled MCC to balance investor interest with heritage priorities, retaining urban character even as regeneration gained pace (see detailed scheme on Figure 5).

The area's transformation was further shaped by successive Strategic Regeneration Frameworks (SRFs), adopted in 2001 and revised in 2014, 2016, and 2020 (MCC 2001; 2014; 2020). These provided a spatial narrative and flexible planning rationale—essentially acting as living policy documents that evolved alongside the area's needs. Rather than imposing rigid blueprints, the SRFs offered design guidance, development principles, and sequencing priorities, allowing MCC to steer development incrementally while adapting to changing market dynamics. MCC also deployed informal tools through its role as a strategic landowner. It assembled key plots, released them gradually, and shaped outcomes via direct negotiations and developer contributions to public realm improvements (Nevin 2003; Cox and O'Brien 2012). English Heritage was an early partner in this process, helping ensure that both statutory protections and planning discretion worked in tandem to promote quality design and conservation-led regeneration.

However, progress was slow in the early 2000s. Misaligned stakeholder priorities, underinvestment, and a shortage of capable delivery partners led to stalled mill conversions and fragmented implementation (Tallon 2013; Fenton et al. 2020). Despite robust frameworks, MCC struggled to attract actors who could meet both conservation and viability expectations.

This changed after 2014, when MCC formed a joint venture with the Abu Dhabi United Group (ADUG)—Manchester Life Development Company. This marked a shift to hybrid governance: blending public legitimacy, regulatory control, and private-sector capital (Silver 2018; Minton 2017). While Manchester Life was not a planning authority, its close integration with MCC allowed for delivery to align tightly with the SRFs, new design codes, and clarified

Figure 5. Ancoats Regeneration Stakeholders Mapping
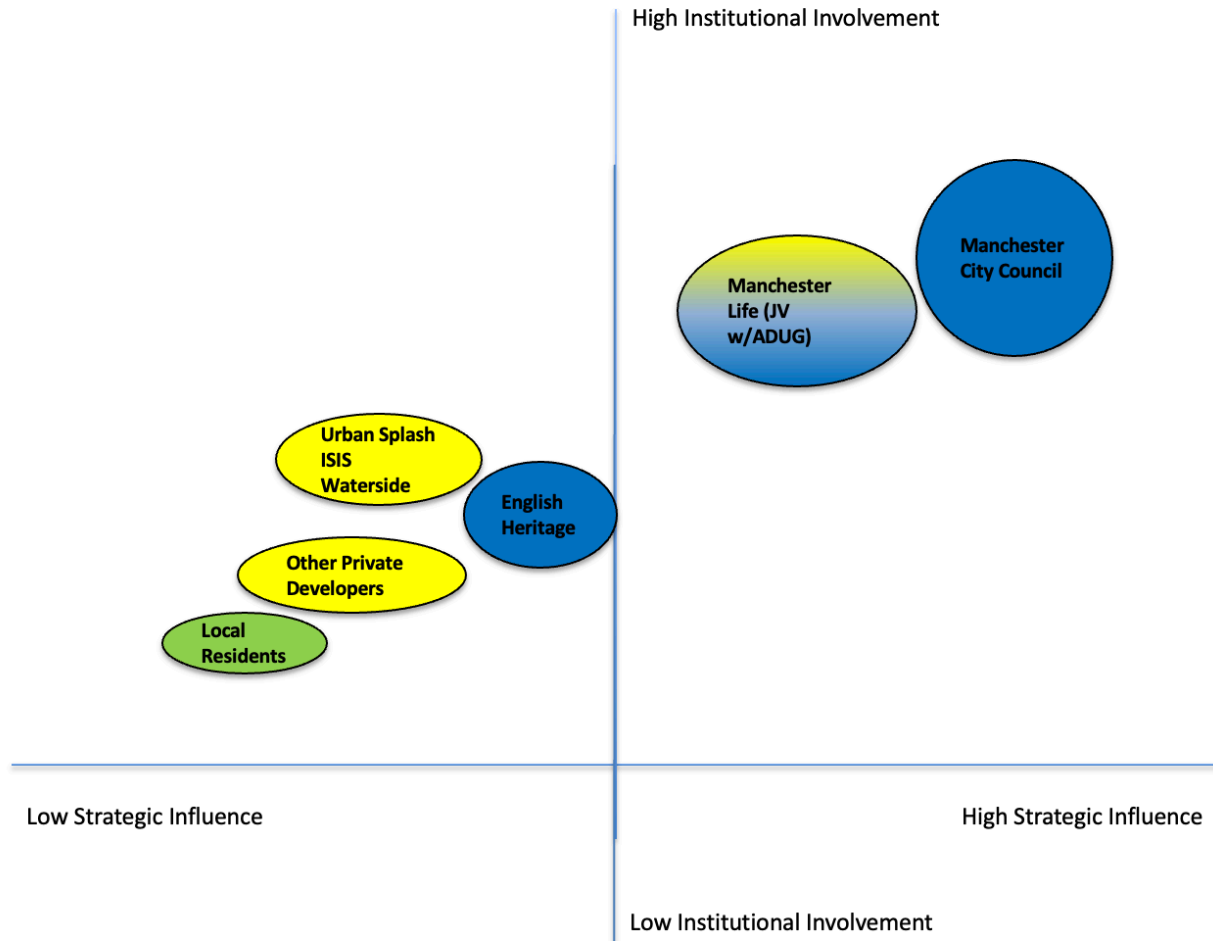
Note: This diagram maps key actors involved in Ancoats long-term regeneration. Color coding represents stakeholder type. Blue—government / public bodies; Yellow—developers / private partners; Green—local community and civil society. Prepared by the author using PowerPoint

expectations. Planning tools became more delivery-oriented, enabling streamlined approvals, clearer sequencing, and visual coherence across developments.

Yet, this tighter alignment came with trade-offs. The governance model moved toward state-enabled entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1989; Raco 2005), in which the state facilitates and de-risks investment but loses some control over affordability and community voice. Rising land values, limited social housing delivery, and a narrowing socio-economic profile have drawn criticism (Madden and Marcuse 2016; Fenton et al. 2020). Still, MCC's enduring role provided institutional memory and adaptability. Even amid austerity, the council leveraged its regulatory powers and land assets to maintain influence over urban form and infrastructure (Cox and O'Brien 2012). Governance at Ancoats thus evolved from public stewardship to strategic co-delivery, with planning tools serving as both safeguards and enablers of change.

4.2.3 Narratives, Legitimacy, and Institutional Memory

The regeneration of Ancoats was never built on spectacle. Unlike MediaCityUK or the Quays, it wasn't launched with glossy ad campaigns or national policy fanfare. Its transformation has been quieter, but no less strategic. The story of Ancoats was constructed through language: "authentic," "industrial," "creative," "walkable." When Manchester City Council (MCC) planning documents began describing the area as a "distinctive neighbourhood with national heritage significance", these terms began to circulate in developer briefs, planning consultations, and media stories—forming the backbone of what Peck (2005) would call a curated "creative city" brand.

The media played a major role in reinforcing this framing. *The Guardian* called Ancoats "where Manchester's past meets its future," positioning its revival as both nostalgic and forward-looking (The Guardian 2019). *Time Out* and *Time Magazine* named it one of the "coolest neighbourhoods in the world" in 2021, praising its blend of redbrick character, canal-side cafés, and independent shops (Time Out 2021). Local outlets like *Manchester Evening News* echoed these themes, branding it "Manchester's hippest new neighbourhood" (MEN 2022). Together, these headlines helped reframe Ancoats not as a planning project but as a lifestyle destination. But the framing masked tensions. For existing residents—especially in adjacent New Islington social housing estates—regeneration didn't always mean inclusion. While Ancoats avoided the demolition-heavy approach of other schemes, early public involvement was minimal, and decisions often came from above (Nevin 2003). Luke and Kaika (2019) argue that the infrastructure of everyday life—like laundrettes, community spaces, and budget shops—was quietly erased in favour of a clean, curated aesthetic aligned with developer interests.

Still, legitimacy came through other channels. MCC's sustained presence gave the project depth and credibility. As Peel (2016) notes, long-term planning teams created institutional memory that helped align values across decades of delivery. This mirrors Healey's (1998) concept of "institutional capacity"—not just competence, but shared vision. The council didn't just produce frameworks; it stewarded place identity, ensured design coherence, and curated partnerships, especially post-2014 when Manchester Life entered the picture. The regeneration of Ancoats succeeded not because it shouted, but because it remembered. It remembered what it had been, what it might become, and who had the tools to guide that change. Whether that memory extends to affordability, inclusion, or long-term belonging is still up for debate.

4.2.4 Phasing and Delivery Timeline

Ancoats' transformation did not happen overnight—nor could any project of this scale, and it is still evolving today, with the area continuing to expand and densify (see Figure 6 below). Its regeneration unfolded gradually through overlapping phases shaped by internal learning, political persistence, and wider policy and market shifts. What began as a fragmented conservation zone eventually became one of Manchester's most strategically positioned neighbourhoods, reflecting the cumulative logic of long-term urban change.
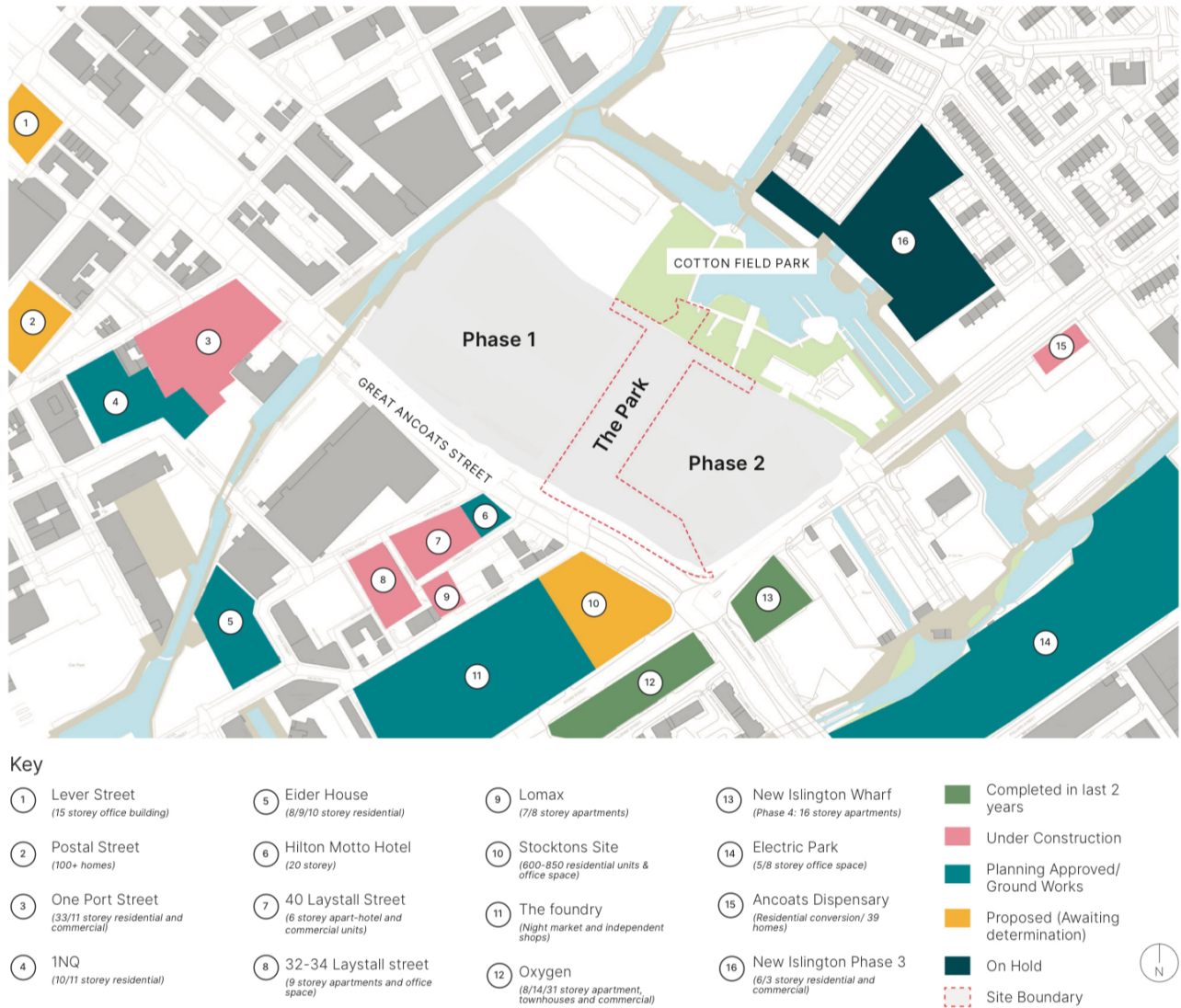
The first phase (1994–2004) focused on stabilisation. Following Conservation Area designation in 1994, Manchester City Council, with support from English Heritage and the Northwest Regional Development Agency, prioritised mill preservation, site assembly, and halting physical decline (Peel 2016). The 2001 Strategic Regeneration Framework offered a coherent planning vision, though implementation remained tentative amid limited market demand and slow-paced conversions (Nevin 2003). Between 2005 and 2013, a transitional phase emerged. MCC continued to lead but began attracting private partners such as Urban Splash and ISIS Waterside. Progress was uneven—delayed further by the 2008 financial crisis. In response, the city revised the SRF in 2008 and again in 2014 to strengthen design expectations and clarify delivery phasing (MCC 2014). The third phase (2014–present) marked the project's acceleration. The creation of Manchester Life—a joint venture between MCC and Abu Dhabi United Group—introduced delivery certainty and branded coordination. This phase brought significant housing growth, improved public realm, and civic spaces like Cutting Room Square (Fenton et al. 2020). Yet it also raised questions about affordability and displacement, echoing broader critiques of urban gentrification (Madden and Marcuse 2016).

4.2.5 Case Reflections and Relevance

Ancoats offers a different kind of lesson than Salford Quays. The project's strength lies in the way institutional memory translated into built form: not through grand gestures, but through repeated frameworks, persistent actors, and a slow recalibration of delivery. One of the clearest insights from Ancoats is the value of local stewardship over time. Manchester City Council never relinquished its role as lead planner or strategic broker. Even when private capital arrived through Manchester Life, the council retained design control, land-use oversight, and narrative direction. This ensured that development served the city's long-term goals—even if affordability and inclusion remain unresolved challenges.

Another key lesson is how narrative framing becomes a governance tool. The image of Ancoats as "authentic," "creative," and "walkable" was used to attract investment—but also to mask trade-offs, such as rising rents and limited community voice. For Ukraine, this demonstrates the double-edged nature of branding. Framing can generate momentum—but without inclusive delivery models, it risks hollow regeneration.

Figure 6. Phasing and Development Status of Ancoats and New Islington

Key

1	Lever Street *(15 storey office building)*	5	Eider House *(8/9/10 storey residential)*
2	Postal Street *(100+ homes)*	6	Hilton Motto Hotel *(20 storey)*
3	One Port Street *(33/11 storey residential and commercial)*	7	40 Laystall Street *(6 storey apart-hotel and commercial units)*
4	1NQ *(10/11 storey residential)*	8	32-34 Laystall street *(9 storey apartments and office space)*

9	Lomax *(7/8 storey apartments)*	13	New Islington Wharf *(Phase 4: 16 storey apartments)*
10	Stocktons Site *(600-850 residential units & office space)*	14	Electric Park *(5/8 storey office space)*
11	The foundry *(Night market and independent shops)*	15	Ancoats Dispensary *(Residential conversion/ 39 homes)*
12	Oxygen *(8/14/31 storey apartment, townhouses and commercial)*	16	New Islington Phase 3 *(6/3 storey residential and commercial)*

Completed in last 2 years

Under Construction

Planning Approved/ Ground Works

Proposed (Awaiting determination)

On Hold

Site Boundary

Note: Image sourced from regeneration documents, accessed via Manchester City Council Website

The role of planning tools is also instructive. The use of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks in Ancoats shows how soft tools—flexible, iterative, and narrative-based—can coordinate action even in discretionary systems. While Ukraine's planning culture is still shaped by rigid masterplans and limited inter-agency coordination, the Ancoats example suggests a way forward: use planning not just to control land use, but to align vision, actors, and sequencing (Peel 2016; Healey 1998). Lastly, the Ancoats case challenges the binary of market-led vs. state-led regeneration. It's a hybrid form—where the state sets the frame, and the market delivers within it. For post-war Ukraine, the question isn't whether to decentralise

or centralise, but how to build institutions that can steward change across decades, without collapsing under political cycles or investor pressure.

4.3 Metrolink & Bee Network

4.3.1 Context

If Manchester's built regeneration told one story, its transport reinvention told another. The Metrolink—launched in 1992 as the UK's first modern light rail system—wasn't just a transport intervention, but also a political statement. A signal that Greater Manchester, fragmented after the 1986 abolition of the metropolitan county, would rebuild a coordinated urban core through mobility. Over the next three decades, the network became the spine of the city-region's integration logic, connecting inner suburbs to key development sites like MediaCityUK, the airport, and Ashton-under-Lyne.

Behind the scenes, Metrolink relied on a complex web of governance arrangements: from early private concession models to Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM)'s increasing strategic role. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)—established in 2011—

Figure 7. Metrolink and Bee Network Visual Identity

Note: Both photographs by the author. (On the left) Metrolink tram, April 2025; (on the right) Bee Network bus, October 2024.

provided a new layer of coordination, enabling more ambitious schemes under devolved powers (Pemberton and Shaw 2012). On the other hand the Bee Network: Greater Manchester's boldest transport vision since Metrolink's launch. Proposed in 2019 and expanded under Mayor Andy Burnham, the Bee Network promised an integrated, London-style system uniting trams, buses, and active travel under a single brand and fare system. It was pitched not only as a transport fix but as a social and economic equaliser—a way to stitch together disconnected communities, reduce car dependency, and drive inclusive growth (TfGM 2021).

But vision alone isn't delivery: the Bee Network has faced political pushback, financial uncertainty, and major implementation challenges. Still, it represents a critical governance shift: from fragmented contracts and ad hoc upgrades to long-term strategic planning with democratic oversight. And in a country where transport is often planned by the central government, Manchester's attempt to "bring buses home" carries wider implications—especially for post-war Ukraine, where mobility systems are being rebuilt from scratch, or heavily modernized because of being outdated and extremely reliable on the soviet heritage.

4.3.2 Governance, Planning Mechanisms

The evolution of Greater Manchester's transport system reflects a deliberate move from fragmented oversight to integrated, locally accountable governance. Anchored in the development of the Metrolink system and the more recent Bee Network initiative, this shift demonstrates how sustained political leadership, strategic planning, and institutional reform can enable system-wide change. The Metrolink light rail, launched in 1992, was a response to the fractured and deregulated public transport landscape of the 1980s. Initially delivered through a Design–Build–Operate–Maintain (DBOM) concession model (Knowles and Ferbrache 2016), oversight was split between operators and the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE), with limited strategic coherence. Planning instruments during this phase were largely project-specific—feasibility studies, central government funding bids, and ad hoc coordination with local planning authorities (Docherty and Shaw 2003). Although Metrolink routes helped connect regeneration areas like Salford Quays, these alignments were often incidental rather than planned.

A structural shift occurred with the creation of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in 2011 and the establishment of Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) as its executive body. These institutions provided an integrated governance framework, allowing for better alignment between transport delivery and spatial planning. From the 2010s onward, Metrolink extensions were increasingly coordinated with regeneration priorities in Strategic Regeneration Frameworks (SRFs) and Local Plans (TfGM 2017; GMCA 2011). Building on this institutional foundation, the Bee Network was launched in 2019 under Mayor

Andy Burnham as a vision for a fully integrated, multimodal transport system. Its ambition was broader than infrastructure alone: it framed transport as a tool for city-region cohesion, environmental improvement, and social inclusion. The Bee Network brought buses, trams, walking, and cycling infrastructure under one cohesive system, overseen by the Bee Network Committee—a joint body representing GMCA, the Mayor, and the ten constituent councils.

Figure 8. Metrolink and Bee Network Stakeholder Mapping
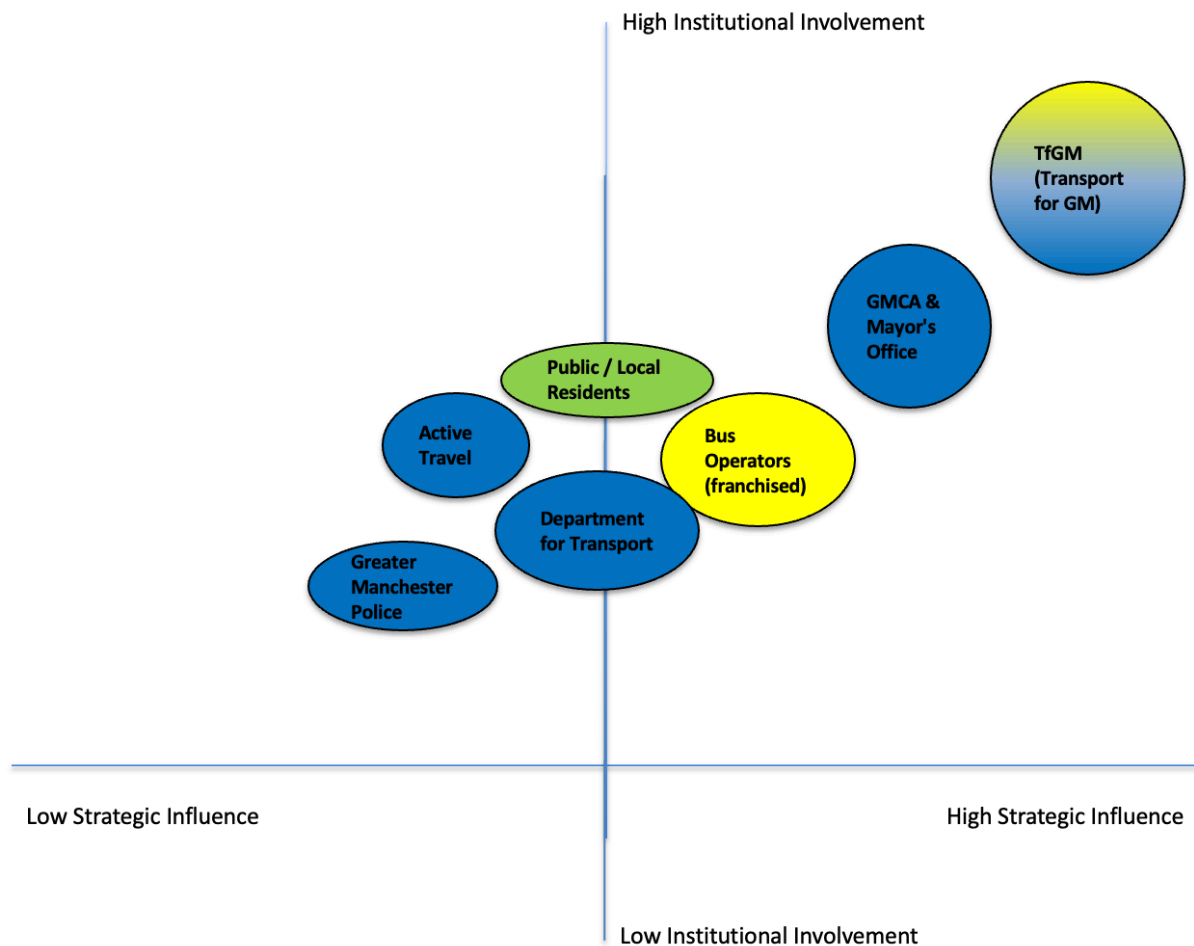
Note: The diagram shows the multi-actor governance structure of the transport projects. Color coding represents stakeholder type. Blue—government / public bodies; Yellow—developers / private partners; Green— local community and civil society, Grey—Formal joint venture entity. Prepared by the author using PowerPoint

The planning tools underpinning the Bee Network mark a significant departure from earlier technocratic approaches. The Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan 2040 set long-term goals for modal shift, air quality, and accessibility, while the Bee Network Vision (TfGM 2019) offered a unifying framework for branding and integration. Crucially, the Franchising Business Case, enabled by the Bus Services Act 2017, allowed GMCA to bring buses back

under public control—breaking from the deregulated model in place since the 1980s. This transition also reflected a new approach to legitimacy. TfGM embedded stakeholder consultation into the planning process, incorporating formal engagement periods, user surveys, and workshops with accessibility advocates, councils, and community groups (TfGM 2021; TfGM 2023). While this participatory model improved alignment, it was not without resistance. Major operators such as Stagecoach and Rotala challenged the franchising process through the courts, citing financial and procedural concerns. A 2022 ruling in favour of GMCA (BBC News 2022) confirmed the legality of the model under the existing devolution framework and marked a turning point for locally controlled transport (more details might be seen on Figure 8).

4.3.3 Narratives and Legitimacy

Greater Manchester's transport evolution has been shaped by both its industrial past and recent governance reform. The region's early railway innovation—including the world's first passenger line—left a robust infrastructure legacy. Yet these early decisions also created path dependency: choices like George Stephenson's track gauge still constrain system flexibility today. By the 1980s, deregulation under the Transport Acts of 1980 and 1985 weakened public oversight and fragmented operations (Deas 2014). In Greater Manchester, this led to disjointed services and inconsistent investment. While the launch of the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) and Metrolink in 1992 began to address gaps, strategic integration remained limited.

A step change came with the region's devolution process. The creation of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in 2011 and the mayoral election in 2017 enabled more coordinated planning across transport, housing, and regeneration (GMCA n.d.; HM Government 2023). These powers laid the groundwork for the Bee Network (see for visual reference Figure 7), introduced in 2019 under Mayor Andy Burnham. Unlike earlier models, it aims to unify buses, trams, cycling, and walking under public control—restoring authority over fares, service quality, and spatial priorities. Bus franchising, enabled by the 2017 Bus Services Act, marked a historic return to local governance.

This is more than a structural reform; it reflects a broader political reassertion of regional agency, linking transport to goals such as inclusion, air quality, and accessibility (TfGM 2024). By combining legacy infrastructure with devolved powers and strategic leadership, Greater Manchester reframes transport as a civic tool. For countries like Ukraine, where governance remains centralised and fragmented, the Bee Network demonstrates how legal reform, investment, and local legitimacy can enable systemic recovery.

4.3.4 Phasing and Delivery Timeline

The Metrolink, launched in 1992, was the UK's first modern light rail system. Delivered through a private concession under the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE), it reflected the national climate of deregulation and arms-length delivery, with limited public subsidy (Docherty and Shaw 2003). Though modest in scope, it symbolised Greater Manchester's renewed regional ambition after the abolition of the county council in 1986.

Extensions followed in the late 1990s and 2000s—reaching Eccles, Ashton-under-Lyne, and East Didsbury—but remained dependent on central government funding and lacked alignment with local spatial strategies.

Figure 9. Bee Network High-Frequency Routes Map
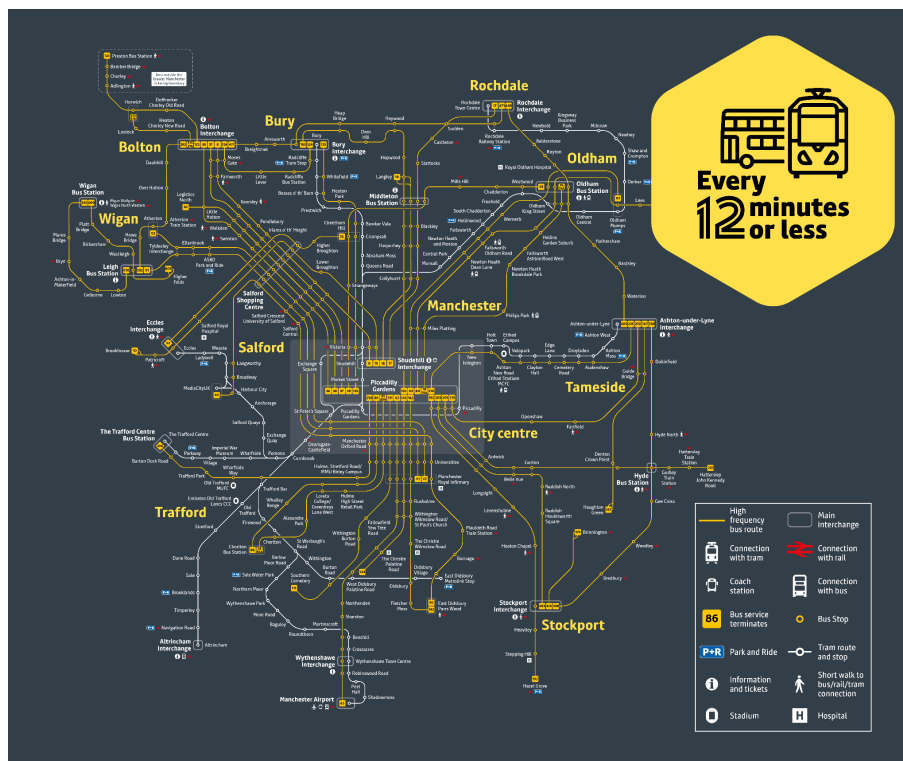
Note: Source—Transport for Greater Manchester (2024). The map visualises high-frequency bus and tram routes across Greater Manchester as part of the integrated Bee Network, published by TfGM on March 15, 2025.

Another milestone came with the creation of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) in 2011. These bodies

enabled more strategic coordination of transport and planning. Metrolink expanded significantly during this period, extending to MediaCityUK (2010), Manchester Airport (2014), and town centres like Rochdale and Oldham. Funding shifted too: the Greater Manchester Transport Fund, financed through local borrowing and retained revenues, signalled growing city-region autonomy (Knowles and Ferbrache 2016). The current phase marks a shift from coordination to full integration. Launched in 2019, the Bee Network aims to unify buses, trams, cycling, and walking under a single, publicly controlled system. Bus franchising—approved under the 2017 Bus Services Act and upheld by a 2022 court ruling—began in Wigan and Bolton in 2023 (up to-date-map is shown in Figure 9), with further rollout planned across the region. These reforms are embedded within broader strategies, including the 2040 Local Transport Plan and Places for Everyone, positioning transport as a driver of inclusive growth and regional cohesion.

4.3.5 Case Reflections and Relevance

The evolution from Metrolink to the Bee Network reflects a broader transformation in how infrastructure is governed. Over three decades, Greater Manchester has moved from a fragmented, privately managed system to one that is more strategically aligned, democratically accountable, and publicly integrated. This trajectory holds valuable insights for Ukraine as it rebuilds its transport and governance systems under extraordinary pressure. One core lesson is that governance capacity is built through a series of iterative reforms, institutional experimentation, and leadership continuity. Metrolink was delivered in a policy environment shaped by deregulation and austerity. Its early implementation was limited in scope and governed through arms-length arrangements. But the foundations it laid—in terms of regional ambition, inter-municipal cooperation, and spatial connectivity—became the basis for later, more integrated initiatives like the Bee Network.

The Bee Network offers an especially relevant example for Ukraine. It illustrates how local authorities, given the right legal and political space, can reclaim public services, coordinate long-term delivery, and respond to citizen needs with more flexibility and responsiveness than central government alone. The franchising of bus services—enabled by the 2017 Bus Services Act but initiated and defended by Greater Manchester—shows how even limited decentralisation powers can be maximised through clear vision and institutional alignment. In the Ukrainian context, where transport governance remains highly centralised and often informal, the Bee Network case offers a counter-model: one that shows how regional leadership, technical agencies (like TfGM), and civic discourse can collectively build a legitimate, citizen-oriented system. It also highlights the need for formal frameworks and delivery structures—something Ukraine currently lacks in much of its transport and spatial planning system, where the absence of clear roles and stable funding undermines implementation. Moreover, both Metrolink and the Bee Network demonstrate the long-term

value of narrative framing and public consultation. Transport infrastructure in Ukraine is often viewed as apolitical and purely technical. Manchester shows that transport can instead be a tool for social inclusion, economic cohesion, and democratic engagement—especially when it is tied to a larger vision of post-crisis recovery and territorial reintegration.

4.4 Mayfield Park

4.4.1 Context

Mayfield Park represents a new generation of urban regeneration in Manchester—one that is no longer just about economic revival or private-led development. Opened in 2022 on a 6.5-acre former industrial site next to Piccadilly Station, Mayfield is Manchester's first new city centre park in over 100 years. This project reflects how governance, partnership, and planning priorities have evolved in the post-crisis urban era.

The context surrounding Mayfield's development was also different. The site, long derelict and politically sensitive due to its proximity to HS2 and Manchester Piccadilly, demanded careful phasing and public legitimacy. The park was deliberately prioritised as the first phase of delivery—not retail, not offices—which marked a symbolic inversion of the traditional regeneration sequence. In doing so, the project helped redefine what counts as "anchor infrastructure" in the post-pandemic city: accessible green space, health-oriented design, and climate resilience (Centre for Cities 2023). Mayfield's narrative positions it at the intersection of multiple policy priorities—urban greening, climate adaptation, post-COVID recovery, and levelling up. It also reflects Greater Manchester's maturing approach to regeneration. As such, it serves as an ideal final case study in this dissertation—not because of its size, but because of what it reveals about how planning tools, stakeholder alignment, and governance values are changing in the city-region today.

4.4.2 Governance, Planning Mechanisms

The delivery of Mayfield Park signals a significant evolution in Manchester's regeneration model—one that centres long-term public value, ecological resilience, and inclusive governance. As illustrated in Figure 10, the project was initiated through the Mayfield Partnership in 2016, bringing together Manchester City Council, LCR (a government-owned land company), Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), and developer U+I (later absorbed by Landsec). This joint venture offered an unusually balanced governance structure: blending public ownership, transport integration, and private-sector delivery expertise. From the outset, Manchester City Council played a strategic co-ownership role, rather than acting solely as a regulator or facilitator. This allowed the Council to shape phasing, land uses, and public realm priorities—including the decision to deliver the 6.5-acre Mayfield Park as the project's opening phase. This move served both practical and symbolic purposes: demonstrating early public

benefit, rebuilding trust in regeneration, and establishing a visible commitment to climate adaptation, accessibility, and health equity.

The project's governance was supported by a tightly aligned planning ecosystem. Rather than relying on generic Strategic Regeneration Frameworks, the Mayfield Regeneration Planning Framework (2018) provided a detailed brief on land use, green infrastructure, heritage protection, and design expectations. It reflected priorities set in the Manchester Local Plan, the draft Places for Everyone strategy, and the city's wider aims around zero carbon targets and

Figure 10. Mayfield Park Delivery Partnership
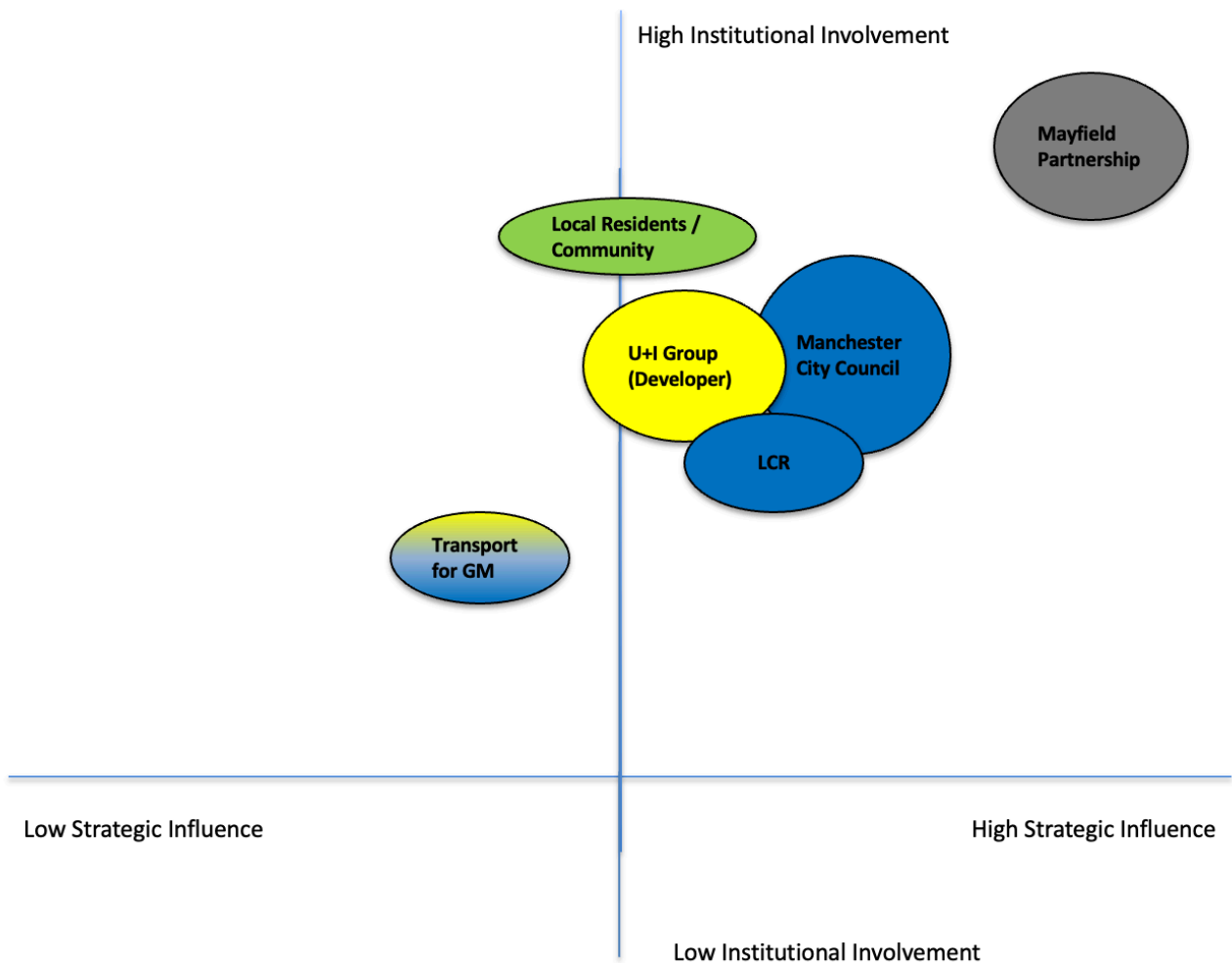
Note: The diagram shows the multi-actor governance structure of the Mayfield project. Color coding represents stakeholder type. Blue—government / public bodies; Yellow—developers / private partners; Green—local community and civil society, Grey—Formal joint venture entity. Prepared by the author using PowerPoint

inclusive growth. Because the Council was both landowner and planning authority, it could ensure that regulatory mechanisms were enforced and aligned with strategic objectives. Planning tools were used not just to control development, but to embed ecological value and community benefit into delivery. The developer, U+I, was subject to strict design codes, environmental assessments, and public engagement standards, ensuring that private capital operated within a framework of public accountability.

Stakeholder alignment extended beyond formal institutions. The project incorporated extensive public consultation, including design workshops, co-created heritage installations, and engagement events with green infrastructure NGOs and local residents. These processes influenced the park's layout, material choices, and ecological programming—embedding legitimacy and local ownership in the project's outcomes.

4.4.3 Narratives and Legitimacy

Mayfield Park was not simply presented as a regeneration scheme—it was framed as a corrective to past approaches. Politically and publicly, the project was positioned as a response to over-commercialised development, loss of public space, and growing urban inequality. In the words of then-Council Leader Sir Richard Leese, Mayfield would be "a new kind of anchor"—not an office block or a shopping centre, but a public park (Manchester City Council 2022). This narrative mattered, because in a city often associated with glass towers, inward investment, and fast-track planning, Mayfield became a symbol of rebalancing regeneration priorities. The decision to front-load the park in the first phase (see for details Figure 11)—before commercial or residential units—was widely covered in regional and national media. *The Guardian* called it "a green heart for a post-COVID Manchester," while the *Manchester Evening News* referred to it as "a rare case of the public realm coming first" (The Guardian 2022; MEN 2021).

This reframing also extended to stakeholder perception. Community engagement wasn't merely performative—it influenced the park's programming, landscape design, and interpretation of industrial heritage. Local narratives were integrated through signage, temporary exhibitions, and creative commissions. Public legitimacy was further reinforced by the physical visibility of the park: located opposite Piccadilly Station, Mayfield was designed to be read as a civic gesture, not a private enclave. Crucially, the project also drew on Manchester's institutional memory. The city had learned from earlier regeneration cycles—some of which were criticised for limited consultation, rapid gentrification, and environmental neglect. By contrast, Mayfield was consciously framed as slow, deliberate, and values-led. The partnership structure, strategic phasing, and emphasis on climate adaptation all reflected a more mature governance ethos—one that prioritised long-term credibility over short-term gain.

For Ukraine, Mayfield's approach holds practical and symbolic relevance. It demonstrates that urban legitimacy can be designed—not just in policy, but in sequence, symbolism, and space. In a post-war context where citizens are sceptical of top-down delivery and rapid privatisation, projects that lead with tangible public benefit—parks, pedestrian routes, shared amenities—can rebuild trust in both government and planning. The emphasis on narrative also matters: regeneration doesn't only restore land; it restores relationships between state, space, and society.

4.4.4 Phasing and Delivery Timeline

The regeneration of Mayfield Park represents a strategic shift in Manchester's development practice—placing public realm and ecological value at the forefront of delivery. Unlike earlier regeneration schemes that led with commercial assets, Mayfield began with the creation of a new 6.5-acre park, signalling a commitment to public benefit and long-term stewardship. Established in 2016, the Mayfield Partnership brought together Manchester City Council, LCR, U+I, and TfGM to coordinate planning, land assembly, and infrastructure delivery. Early work focused on securing development agreements and embedding the project within strategic frameworks such as the draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the Manchester Local Plan. Public engagement and environmental assessments informed the adoption of the Mayfield Regeneration Planning Framework in 2018, which prioritised green infrastructure and climate adaptation.

Construction of the park began in 2020 and included the daylighting of the River Medlock, flood resilience works, biodiversity enhancements, and accessible public space—partially funded by initiatives such as Defra's Urban Tree Challenge Fund. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the park was completed on schedule and opened in September 2022, receiving strong public support. Subsequent phases are now underway (See Figure 11 for a visual representation), including the transformation of Mayfield Depot for cultural use, delivery of Grade A office space, and residential schemes with a proposed 20% affordable housing quota. These are complemented by enhanced walking and cycling routes and future integration with the HS2 Northern Hub and Piccadilly Station. Crucially, the phasing strategy ensures the park remains visible and central, as seen in Figure 12—anchoring the site's identity in public space rather than private development.

4.4.5 Case Reflections and Relevance

Mayfield Park represents a quiet but profound evolution in Manchester's approach to urban regeneration. In contrast to earlier projects that led with infrastructure or private investment, Mayfield was framed around public benefit first—a shift in both governance philosophy and planning practice. The choice to deliver a new civic park before any

Figure 11. Masterplan of Mayfield Regeneration Area

Note: Image sourced from official planning documents, accessed through Manchester City Council Website

commercial units was not simply symbolic; it was a political statement about values-led recovery. From a governance perspective, Mayfield illustrates how hybrid partnerships—when carefully designed—can achieve both delivery efficiency and democratic accountability. The presence of Manchester City Council, LCR, and TfGM alongside a private master-developer created an arrangement where no single actor dominated the process. Planning tools were not used merely to regulate, but to structure shared commitments to environmental quality, public access, and phased implementation. This stands in contrast to earlier Manchester projects where public space often arrived last, or not at all. The case also highlights how narrative framing and institutional memory shape regeneration outcomes. Mayfield was explicitly positioned as a new type of "anchor"—a civic amenity, not a corporate icon. This framing drew on lessons from past projects criticised for gentrification, exclusion, or over-commercialisation. In this way, Mayfield did not reject Manchester's regeneration legacy; it refined it. The use of tools like landscape-led design, flood mitigation, and co-created programming demonstrates a more holistic view of what urban value looks like.

For Ukraine, this case offers highly relevant insights. Post-war cities will face immense pressure to rebuild quickly—especially housing, transport, and infrastructure. But Mayfield shows that early investment in shared civic assets—parks, public spaces, and health-supportive

environments—can be politically powerful and socially healing. In environments where public trust is fragile, projects that foreground collective benefit can re-legitimize planning institutions and create visible, low-barrier successes. Mayfield also shows the importance of institutional architecture. Rather than ad hoc governance, the project was delivered through a clear partnership with long-term accountability structures. This contrasts with Ukraine's current reality, where delivery often hinges on informal negotiations or external donor frameworks. As Ukraine develops new planning laws and decentralised tools, the Mayfield example suggests that governance design matters as much as project design. This park may not be the largest or most high-profile of Manchester's regeneration schemes—but it might be the most instructive for cities seeking to rebuild with integrity, inclusivity, and public legitimacy at their core.

Figure 12. Everyday life in Mayfield Park

Note: Photograph by the author (March 2025)

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Research Implementation and Analytical Process

This dissertation employed a qualitative, comparative case study methodology to investigate the governance mechanisms underpinning four flagship urban regeneration projects in Manchester: Salford Quays, Ancoats, the Metrolink and Bee Network, and Mayfield Park. The aim was to examine how governance structures, delivery models, and planning tools evolved across time and space—and what these trajectories can teach us about post-war recovery planning, particularly in the Ukrainian context.

5.1.1 Data Collection

Given the documentary nature of this research, all data was collected from publicly available secondary sources. The principal materials included strategic planning documents (e.g., Strategic Regeneration Frameworks, Local Plans, and Regeneration Planning Frameworks), national policy texts (such as the National Planning Policy Framework, National Design Guide, and Town and Country Planning Act 1990), academic literature, government and institutional reports, and media discourse. Key planning documents were accessed through local authority websites (Manchester City Council, Salford City Council, GMCA), while academic materials were drawn from university databases and journal repositories. Media analysis included articles from *The Guardian*, *BBC News*, *Manchester Evening News*, and *Place North West*.

Visual evidence also played an important role. The author conducted in-situ observational visits to all four case sites in Manchester between October 2024 and May 2025. These visits supported spatial interpretation and added a grounded understanding of built form, public realm treatment, and delivery phasing. The diversity of sources ensured data triangulation, allowing for a rich and multi-dimensional view of each regeneration process.

5.1.2 Analytical Approach

The analytical framework for this study was developed through the synthesis of governance and planning literature, particularly drawing on concepts of multi-scalar governance (Jessop, 1998; Pierre & Peters, 2000), institutional capacity (Healey, 1998), delivery logic (Harvey, 1989), and the discretionary nature of UK planning systems (Booth, 1995; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012). These theoretical lenses were operationalised into a comparative matrix of eleven variables, which formed the foundation for the Final Table presented in Chapter 5.

For each case study, governance arrangements, delivery tools, funding models, stakeholder alignments, and legitimacy strategies were extracted from the data and categorised within this matrix. Analytical work was iterative—moving back and forth between theory, document content, and site observations. This reflexive approach allowed for critical interpretation rather than mere description. It also helped surface tacit elements of governance, such as institutional memory, the use of narrative as a planning tool, or the performative function of civic legitimacy. Each case was analysed in its own right but also compared across others to identify recurrent mechanisms and context-specific strategies. This comparative logic provided a more holistic understanding of how governance "travels" between projects, adapts to new constraints, and evolves over time.

5.1.3 Presentation of Results

Table 2 presents the core empirical product of this study: a structured, side-by-side comparison of the four case studies across all eleven governance variables. This visualisation enables a cross-sectional reading of Manchester's regeneration logics, from centralised development corporations to modern-day multi-partner stewardship. It shows, for instance, how public legitimacy and regulatory flexibility became increasingly important over time, or how strategic narrative evolved from growth-first branding to value-led framing.

The table also reveals the growing capacity of Manchester's institutions to act not just as facilitators but as coordinators of complex, long-term delivery. Whether through land-use planning, stakeholder alignment, or the sequencing of civic benefits, each project evidences how urban transformation became more embedded, negotiated, and symbolic. This dataset—though qualitative—has analytical depth and comparative breadth. It consolidates decades of planning evolution into a usable framework, one that can inform both academic research and practical recovery efforts.

Table 2. Summary Table of Case Study Research Findings

Variable Analysed	Salford Quays	Ancoats	Metrolink/BeeNetwork	Mayfield Park
Governance Structure	Initially centralised via CMDC, then hybrid public-private under Salford City Council leadership	Local authority-led throughout; strategic public stewardship with private partnership post-2014	Initially fragmented; now devolved under GMCA and TfGM leadership	Hybrid governance: MCC, TfGM, LCR, and U+I/Landsec as public-private partnership
Delivery Mechanism	UDC (1988–1996), then council-led regeneration via strategic planning	Council-led in early stages; joint venture (Manchester Life) post-2014	Early: private concession model; Now: publicly controlled franchise under Bee Network	Joint venture (Mayfield Partnership) with co-ownership by public sector
Funding Sources	Early public land assembly grants, later joint ventures and private investment (e.g. Peel Holdings, BBC)	Public land assembly; NWDA funding; Manchester Life (ADUG) investment	Central government grants, local transport fund, local borrowing, devolved revenue streams	Mixed: Defra green grants, local authority land equity, private capital
Policy / Planning Tools	Salford Local Plan, MediaCityUK Planning Guidance, Places for Everyone (PfE)	SRFs (2001, 2014, 2020), Conservation Area status, Neighbourhood Frameworks	GM Transport Strategy 2040, Bus Services Act 2017, Places for Everyone	Mayfield Regeneration Planning Framework (2018), Manchester Local Plan
Stakeholder Alignment	Transitioned from fragmented to coordinated with MCC, TfGM, Peel, BBC, University of Salford	Strong alignment between MCC, English Heritage, Manchester Life; tight land release control	High alignment between GMCA, TfGM, 10 boroughs; extensive consultation	Strong—multi-scalar coordination with developers, NGOs, and community actors

Regulatory Flexibility	High—early use of Simplified Planning Zones, later plan-led with discretionary overlays	Medium—flexible SRFs and conservation policy combined with MCC negotiation	Medium to high—formal statutory planning combined with negotiated delivery	High—flexible tools used to embed ecological and design-led delivery
Public Legitimacy	Weak in early stages; improved through later consultation and civic integration	Moderate—initially weak, later improved via design codes and improved public space	High—Both projects are promoted as democratic, inclusive, with broad public support	High—framed as inclusive, public-first; strong local engagement shaped park design
Media Framing / Public Reception	Initially framed as speculative; later celebrated as "The Lowry Effect" and "MediaCityUK" success	Critically praised; media framed as creative, walkable, liveable ("coolest neighbourhoods")	Publicly celebrated, especially under Andy Burnham; some operator resistance	Celebrated: "a green heart for a post-COVID Manchester", model of values-led recovery
Strategic Narrative	"The Lowry effect", "Salford's rebirth", "MediaCityUK"	"Authenticity", "heritage-led revival", "creative city"	"Bringing buses home", "London-style integration", "inclusive growth"	"A rare case of the public realm coming first", "green anchor"
Institutional Continuity	Moderate to high—shift from CMDC to council continuity ensured learning across phases	High—same planning authority and evolving frameworks over 30 years	High—TfGM, GMCA, and mayoral leadership maintained over decades	Moderate—project started recently but builds on past planning knowledge
Outcome Relevance	Transferable with adaptation; shows both risks of centralised delivery and power of institutional recovery	Highly relevant for Ukraine; demonstrates iterative governance, design-led planning, and city branding	Transferable conceptually; shows how infrastructure governance can evolve under devolution (decentralisation in Ukrainian case)	Highly transferable in principle; shows how civic legitimacy can anchor recovery delivery

5.2 Findings, Theoretical Reflections

This research sought to understand the institutional underpinnings of urban transformation in Manchester and assess their relevance to post-war recovery in Ukraine. The findings confirm that regeneration is a product of governance—of how institutions make decisions, align actors, and translate planning frameworks into physical outcomes.

One of the clearest conclusions emerging from the analysis is that there is no singular governance model behind Manchester's transformation. Rather, the city developed a layered, evolving approach—moving from centralised urban development corporations in the 1980s (e.g., CMDC in Salford Quays) to contemporary joint ventures and public-private partnerships (e.g., Mayfield Park). This progression aligns with the wider trajectory of British urban governance as described by Peck and Ward (2002), Imrie and Raco (2003), and Deas (2014): from deregulation and entrepreneurialism to more embedded, multi-actor collaboration.

In each case study, delivery depended not only on structural mechanisms but also on narrative framing, institutional continuity, and adaptive leadership. The analysis reveals that:

- **Governance structure** was most effective when hybrid: combining public strategic oversight with private delivery capacity.
- **Delivery mechanisms** varied widely, but success often hinged on long-term land control and flexible planning tools.
- **Public legitimacy** grew in importance over time, especially in later-stage projects like Ancoats and Mayfield, where civic space and engagement took centre stage.
- **Narrative** served not just as branding, but as a governance device—defining what regeneration meant and to whom.

These findings echo and deepen theoretical insights on institutional capacity (Healey, 1998) and multi-level governance (Jessop, 1998). They also extend Booth's (1995) and Allmendinger & Haughton's (2012) arguments about discretionary systems—highlighting how flexibility must be balanced with continuity, public accountability, and shared vision to avoid incoherence or developer capture.

For Ukraine, the relevance of these findings is significant but not straightforward. The Ukrainian planning system remains heavily centralised and formally regulatory—yet in practice it is marked by informality, improvisation, and personality-driven governance (Zile, 2023; Dulko, 2023). In this context, the lessons from Manchester are not blueprints but prompts. They suggest that:

- Strong planning outcomes require strong institutions—not just legal frameworks, but relational capacity and political will.
- Planning discretion can be powerful, but only if grounded in enforceable principles, public legitimacy, and strategic coherence.
- Institutional continuity is as important as innovation. Projects that survive electoral cycles and leadership changes are those embedded in shared governance cultures.
- Civic legitimacy is not optional. Especially in post-war recovery, legitimacy is built not just through consultation but through early, visible public benefit—parks, schools, health infrastructure.

Projects like Mayfield Park offer concrete inspiration: leading with public space, structuring partnerships transparently, and rooting planning tools in climate and social equity goals. Ancoats, too, shows the power of slow regeneration rooted in heritage, adaptive reuse, and municipal patience. These cases contrast sharply with top-down, investor-led schemes still common in Ukrainian cities, where public benefit often remains a rhetorical afterthought.

This study contributes new insights to urban planning scholarship in three ways:

1. **Methodological innovation:** The comparative governance matrix developed for this study offers a flexible yet structured approach to analysing complex urban delivery systems. It can be adapted for other cities, including those in post-conflict or post-socialist contexts.
2. **Theoretical enrichment:** The findings reinforce but also refine established theories on institutional capacity, strategic urbanism, and discretionary planning. They highlight how institutional design and public legitimacy interact to shape long-term urban outcomes.
3. **Policy relevance:** By linking UK regeneration experience to Ukrainian recovery needs, the research bridges global urban theory with grounded post-war planning practice. It demonstrates that successful recovery is not about copying models but understanding how governance scaffolds physical change.

This dissertation is limited by its exclusive reliance on secondary data. While document analysis and site visits provided robust insights, interviews with planners, policymakers, or community actors could have deepened understanding—particularly around informal negotiations or tensions between strategic intent and delivery. Future research could extend this study through:

- Interviews or focus groups with Ukrainian planning professionals involved in reconstruction
- Case studies of Ukrainian cities experimenting with strategic or participatory planning tools

- Comparative analysis with other post-conflict settings.

- Such studies would help clarify how principles of governance can be adapted—not just technically, but culturally and politically.

Manchester's regeneration is not a miracle story—it is a story of institutional persistence, adaptive governance, and hard-earned legitimacy. Its successes were not inevitable, nor were its failures final. For Ukraine, the lesson is that post-war recovery cannot rest on policy slogans or donor funding alone. It must be built on governance foundations that are inclusive, strategic, and capable of learning over time. If there is one core insight this research offers, it is this: the most powerful tool in recovery is not concrete or cash—it is institutional memory. Cities that remember how to plan, how to govern, and how to include will be the ones that not only rebuild, but reimagine themselves for the future.

And for those places where that memory has been lost or never existed, recovery can still begin—because someone has done it before. The lessons are there. What matters is the willingness to learn, adapt, and build with intention.

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