OMBC SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETING

3 OCTOBER 2024

Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Chair of Trustees

Cllr Barbara Brownridge - Trustee

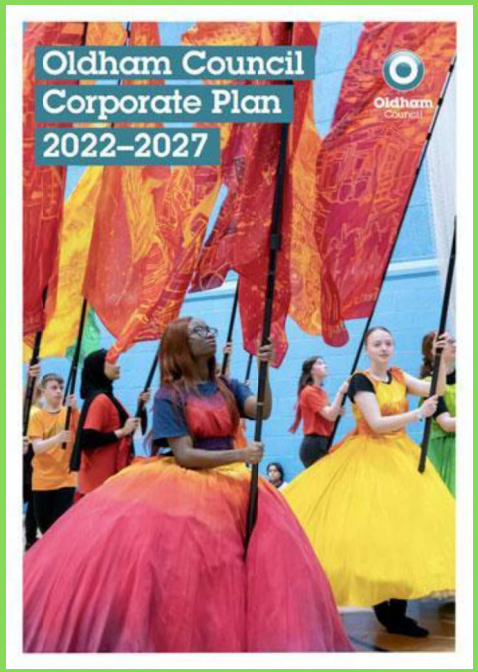
Allan Tyrer - Trustee and Chair of Finance and Risk Committee

Anna da Silva - CEO

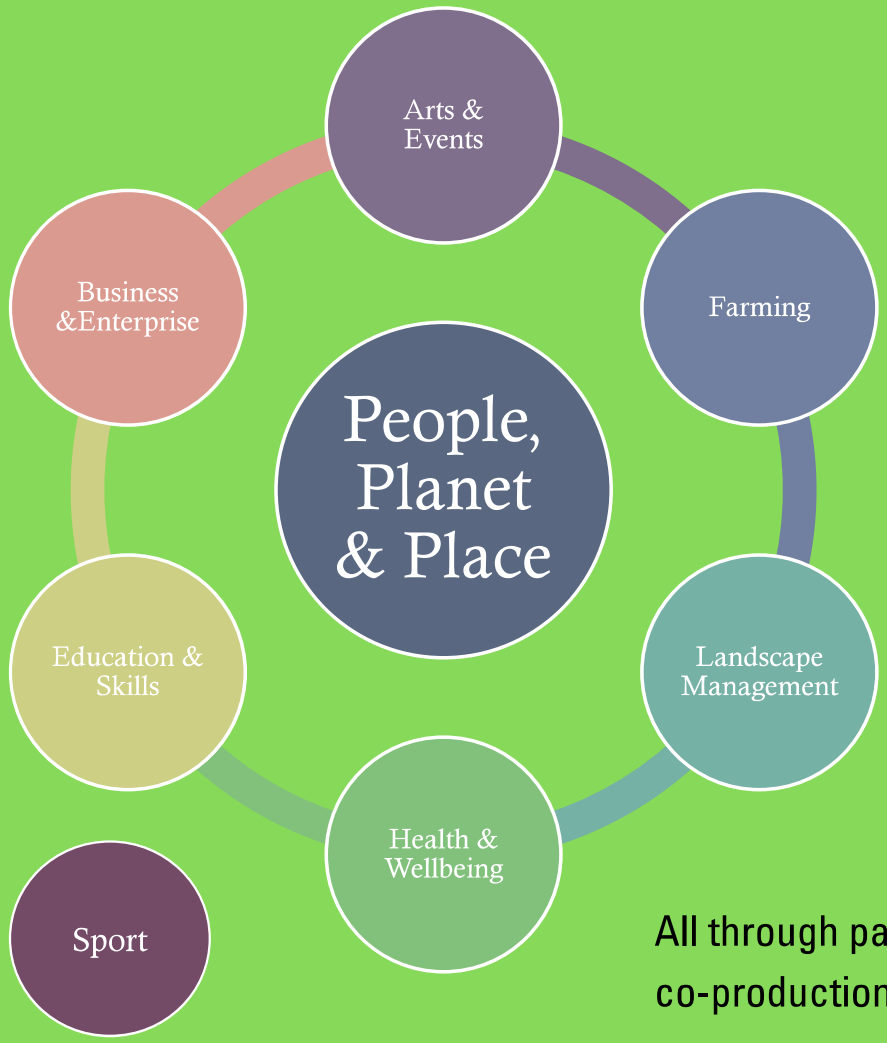
CREATING THE UK'S LARGEST URBAN FARM & ECO PARK

- **For People**: by producing healthy food, supporting physical activity, promoting connection with nature and community, and enhancing health and wellbeing
- **For Planet**: by managing and improving the landscape to build biodiversity, capture carbon, enhance water quality and increase ecosystem service value
- **For Place:** by generating training, education, jobs and business opportunities, attracting new visitors and investors to Oldham, and enhancing civic pride

DELIVERING OLDHAM'S PRIORITIES



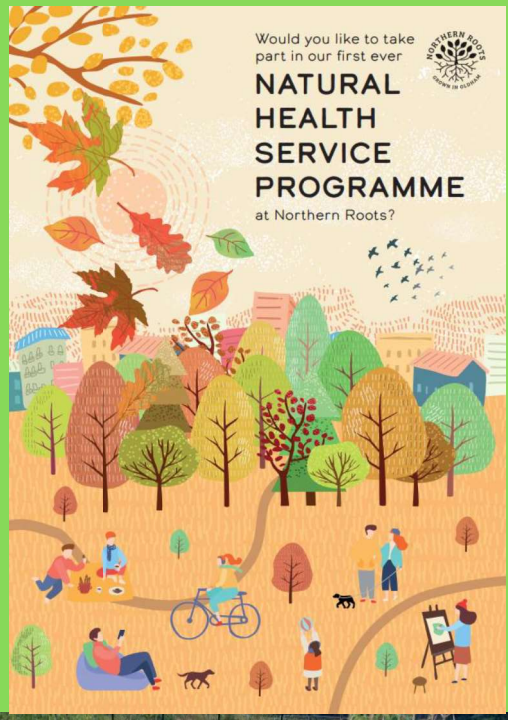
DELIVERING IMPACT: OPERATING MODEL



All through partnership and co-production

NORTHERN ROOTS

DELIVERING IMPACT: NATURAL HEALTH SERVICE



SO FAR:

- 4 contracts in last 12 months with focus on mental health, social isolation, addiction, diabetes, health inequalities: 101 participants so far. Significant improvements to mental & physical health.
- Urban Case Study for 9 country EU Horizon research project Green Me
- Members of GM Nature for Health Steering Committee
- 15 Wellbeing volunteers
- Three community champions retained to work in Natural Health Service
- Shortlisted for GSK Kings Fund Awards

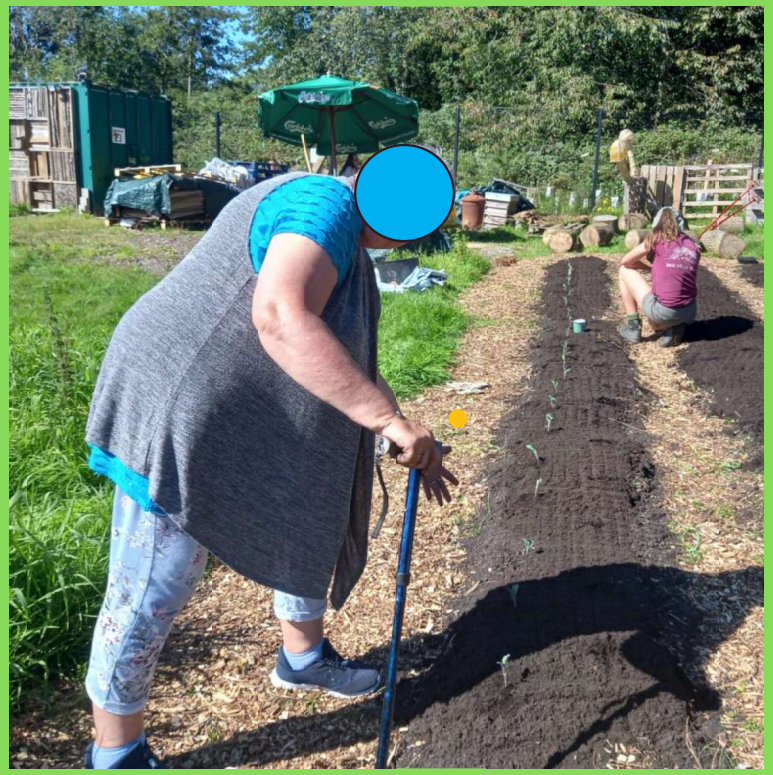
Partners: Hilltop Surgery, Get Oldham Working, Turning Point, Oldham Public Health, Salford Uni, Edge Hill Uni, Chai Ladies, BAME Connect, GM SAWN, Fatima Women's, GM ICB, Action Together

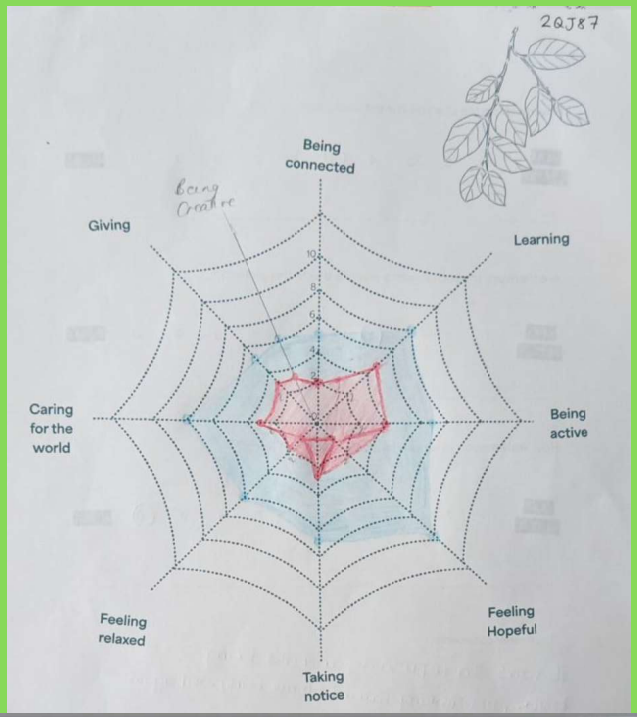
NEXT STEPS:

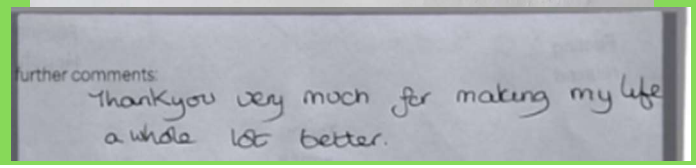
- Secure additional funding and commissioning contracts
- Support other providers to set up on site
- Harness whole site as wellbeing farm; build dedicated Health and Wellbeing Facility.

NORTHERN ROOTS STORIES: MARY

'Northern Roots has saved my life and everyone should know about it"






Further comments:
Thankyou very much for making my life a whole lot better.

DELIVERING IMPACT: REGENERATIVE FARMING

SO FAR:

Developed Phase 1 farm: 2 harvests, 40+ crops, 80 volunteers, 6 Corporate Away Days, community lunches, weekly farm sales, 3 small businesses supported, produce sold cheaper than Asda, mixed local and regional visitors.

Started Phase 2 farm: fenced 4 acre area, started soil preparation, secured funding from Halpin Trust, Oglesby Trust, Garfield Weston.

Partners: Gaia Foundation, Oldham Foodbank/Vegbag.

NEXT STEPS:

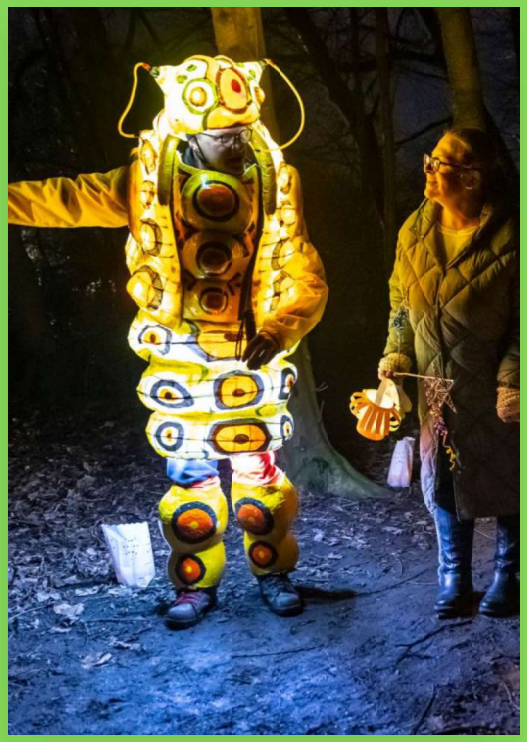
Complete Phase 2 by VC opening: dispense planning conditions, polytunnels, barn, community kitchen and gathering space, wide variety of crops, chickens, further small businesses. Supply café, shop, local customers.

Phase 3 farm: a further 6 acres

Harnessing productive capacity of the wider site: livestock, foraging, orchards, woodland management.

NORTHERN ROOTS STORIES: SUE

"I had no idea what to expect when I came to the first Community Champion meeting. I was a bit guarded. I'm sure everybody felt the same. Then after a couple of meetings something happened. We began to open up to each other. It's an atmosphere where everyone trusts and respects each other. I'm loving the genuine friendships that are developing based upon shared interests and passions. I am so happy to be part of the group."



DELIVERING IMPACT: BUSINESS & ENTERPRISE

SO FAR:

- **Supported 6 small businesses to set up on site:** hosted business open day; in conversation with six more. Developed model for sub-licensing
- **Started to generate commercial income:** through produce sales, paid workshops, corporate away days.
- **Commissioned dozens of local businesses:** to supply goods, deliver services, or trade at our events.

Partners: Local Motion, Upturn, Manchester Growth Co.

NEXT STEPS:

- Continue to find and support more ambulant businesses to operate on and from site
- With lease, work with operators to finance and develop businesses requiring fixed facilities or long term – bike hub, adventure play, swimming, heritage orchard

DELIVERING IMPACT: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

SO FAR:

- Created 6 ponds, enhanced 10 acres of grassland & 20 acres of woodland, planted 2000 trees and hedgerow plants, tackled invasive species
- Created a community garden and wildfower meadow
- Created partial BNG management plans.
- Collected six tonnes of litter
- Installed new steps and paths.

Partners: Life for a Life, Medlock Valley Nature Partnership, Lancs Wildlife Trust, GMEF, City of Trees, GMEU

NEXT STEPS:

- Complete BNG plans; ongoing habitat improvement and biodiversity net gain
- Improved access: paths, steps, toilets, seating, signage
- Sports and leisure facilities: Swimming, cycling, pitches, play, adventure play

DELIVERING IMPACT: ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE

SO FAR:

- **Piloted a diverse and creative range of outdoor cultural events:** Playing Out, Illuminate, Beautiful Oldham – Why Not, Manchester Histories Festival, 10,000 Steps Around the World: over 3000 attendees.
- **Commissioned and supported local creatives**: Eye of Newt, Paper Trails Collective, Lingua Franca CIC, 24 Pictures.
- **Developed Creative Skills projects for Oldham young people:** Oldham College, Oldham Theatre Workshop, visiting schools and children.
- **Secured 2 x NLHF Funding:** used it to recruit and empower Community Champions

Partners: Odham Gallery & Libraries, Oldham Cultural Partnership, Oldham College, Fatima Women's, Salvation Army, Walk the Plank, Wild Rumpus etc

NEXT STEPS:

- More events, commissions, training opportunities 24-25,
- **Deliver second NLHF project:** Extend and expand CCs, deliver Interpretation showcasing Oldham's Heritage
- **Submit first application to ACE:** develop Opening Season of events. Work towards NPO status.

NORTHERN ROOTS STORIES: FAIZA

" The Beautiful Oldham - Why Not?' project has inspired me to delve deeper into my own history and connection to Oldham. A passion project has taken form and I've started work on recounting the untold stories of my elders and the generation who emigrated from Pakistan in the 1960's to work in the mills. It has also introduced me to a wide range of Oldham residents with varied backgrounds whom it has been a pleasure to learn from and spend time with."

DELIVERING IMPACT: LEARNING & SKILLS

SO FAR:

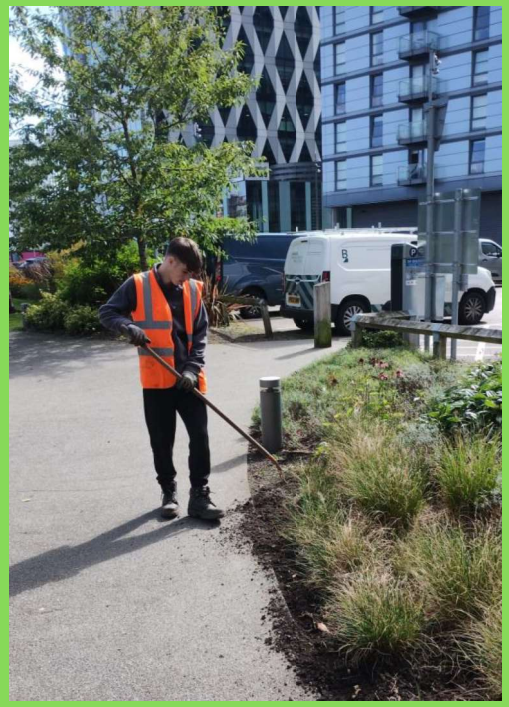
- **Over 600 children & young people taken part in educational activities:** forest school, HAF and holiday provision, school visits, Alternate Provision, college and University projects.
- **Successfully engaged young people struggling with education:** qualifications and paid placements for young offenders, care leavers, children at risk of permanent exclusion & NEET, neurodiverse young people.
- **Delivered free and paid workshops** for adults and children.

Partners: Positive Steps, Skills Mill, Oldham College, Mahdlo,

NEXT STEPS:

- **Recruit Learning Manager** with new NLHF funding to build full learning programme pre opening.
- Develop whole site as **a living learning lab.**
- Build **sponsorship and training** opportunities with providers and employers

"If I hadn't attended Northern Roots Positive Futures programme then I don't know what I would be doing when leaving school. Thanks to staff believing in me, I have been able to achieve more than I ever expected, to now have a full time job is amazing."



"Rarely have I seen such an ambitious plan come together in such a sure-footed, collaborative way. Thrilled to have this one on our doorstep for our patients and all residents of Oldham." Dr. John Patterson

'Positive Steps has found great benefits in our partnership with Northern Roots. We have worked together to provide young people with vocational experience and qualifications. The green economy is an important pathway for future opportunities and supports both local and regional initiatives like Atom Valley and Oldham's commitment to improving green spaces. We're looking forward to expanding our partnership over the coming years, initially through developing additional alternative provision opportunities' **Paul Axon, CEO Positive Steps**

"Oldham College is a keen partner of, and advocate for Northern Roots. Whether our students are acting as Community Champions, citizen rangers or researchers there are many opportunities for the College community to get involved. We have volunteers, designers and builders all ready and willing to help out. We will develop our curricula to incorporate new wellbeing programmes as part of the Natural Health Service (for staff and learners). Once the facilities are built, we want to help arrange performances, youth curated events and showcase local talent." **Alan Benvie, Vice Principal, Oldham College**

"At Action Together we can already see the difference that Northern Roots is making to Oldham people. *Their Natural Health Service has made a real difference to lives of Oldhamers, especially those experiencing deep-rooted health inequalities. We are excited about the future phases of development, and the health, wellbeing and economic benefits that will be realised for Oldham residents and communities.* ***The Northern Roots charity is transforming a forgotten wasteland into another jewel in Oldham's crown."*** **Liz Windsor-Welsh, CEO, Action Together**

PREPARING FOR OPENING: 2025 TO 2026

The Northern Roots Charity's focus over the coming 18 months is to be prepared to take full advantage of the Visitor Centre, Forestry Skills Centre and Phase 2 farm, and operate as a self-sustaining, vibrant community asset and visitor destination from 2026:

- Café, shop, events & education offer
- Marketing, interpretation, business modelling, rebrand , fundraising

AFTER OPENING: 2026 & BEYOND

- By opening:
  - Capital – Phase 2 farm, play, solar array, swimming pond, pitches, wider site access, cycle routes
  - Revenue – further develop farming, learning, health, landscape management, arts, business and sports.
  - Develop the site as living lab showcasing biodiversity net gain, sustainable urban drainage, green technologies & regenerative farming
- After opening
  - Further capital stages – bike hub, pitches, phase 3 farm, Longhouse, Wellbeing/Learning/Arts Centre, Adventure Play, Performance areas
  - Commercial revenue to subsidise charitable operations

2026 & BEYOND: 2030 IMPACT TARGETS

Place

- 100,000 visitors to Northern Roots per annum by the year 2026, 300,000 by 2030
- Supported up to 35-40 new businesses
- 60-80 new jobs created, 20% for people who would otherwise be unemployed
- Leveraged £30million of new funding and investment in Oldham

People

- At least 300 social prescriptions per annum
- 50 volunteering placements and 25 work experience placement per annum
- 15 trainee/apprentice positions per annum
- 4,500 school visits per annum

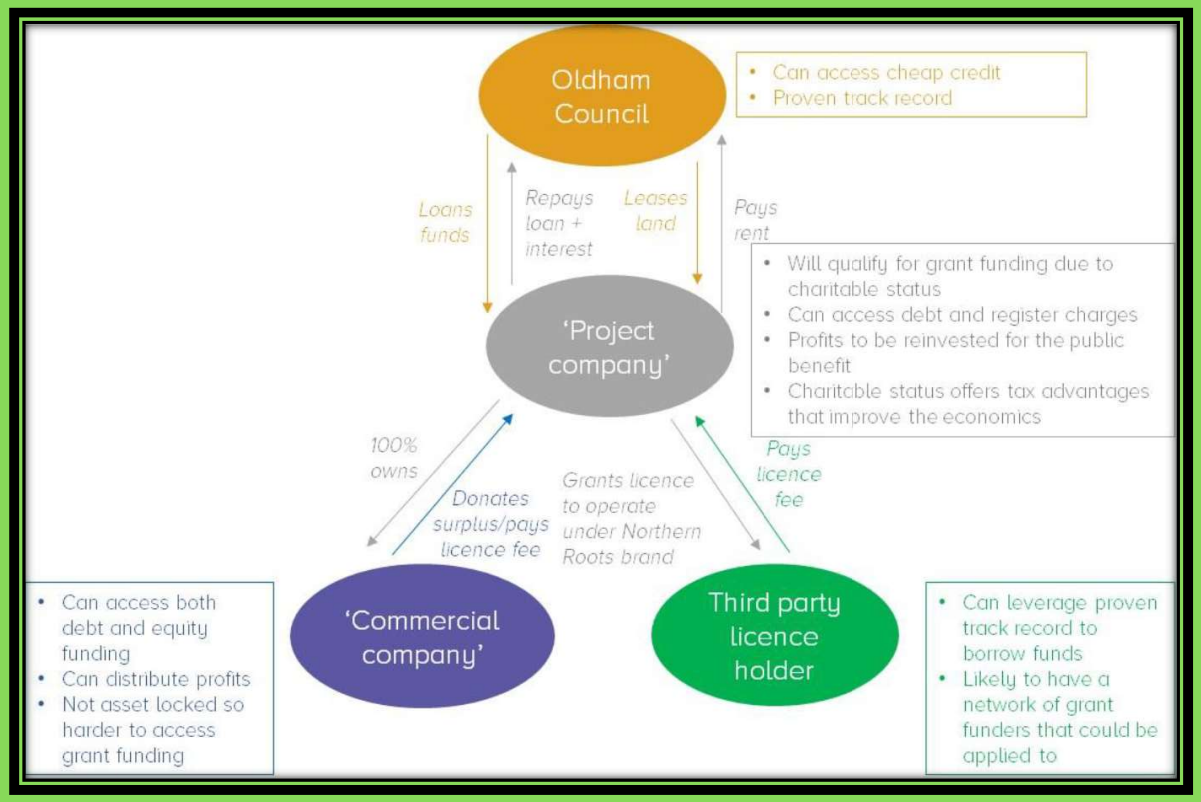
Planet

- 25% biodiversity net gain, through grassland enrichment, woodland management, tree and hedge planting, and wetland creation
- 30,000 tonnes of carbon stored in woodland and soils by 2050
- 400 KWP of green energy generated
- Water Quality improved and run off reduced
- Earth worm populations increased by 87 million

NORTHERN ROOTS

THE BACKGROUND – FEASIBILITY PHASE 2016-18

- Lead by Cllr Jabbar & OMBC Policy team – worked with consultants and local partners to develop initial masterplan, operating model, SROI evaluation, community and partner consultation, legal and governance structure, and funding model
- Governance structure proposed by Stoneking
- Cabinet paper in Jan 2019 to approve inception phase
- Anna da Silva recruited as Project Director.



NORTHERN ROOTS

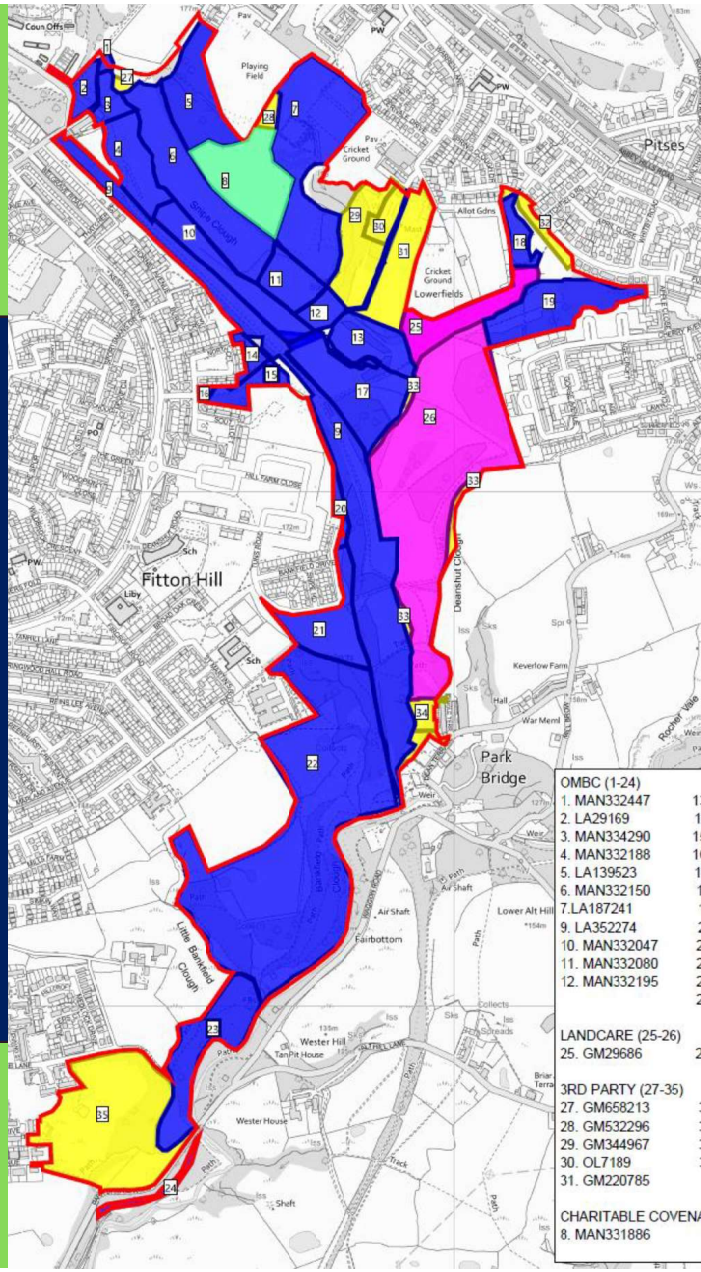
INCEPTION PHASE 2019 - 2022

- Objectives set in Project Director contract Feb 2019:

It is proposed that the establishment period will take two years, at the end of which there would be:

- An operative brand and businesses trading under licence
- Strong community engagement and involvement
- Delivery of early implementation projects
- Planning approval for the full Northern Roots opportunity site
- Legal infrastructure in place and operational
- Inward investments secured and an investment strategy and pipeline
- Contracts and commissioning contracts operational
- Growing social enterprise eco-system operating under Northern Roots licence

OMBC Cabinet Report January 2019



NORTHERN ROOTS

INCEPTION PHASE 2019 - 2021

Delivery against targets	
An operative brand and businesses trading under licence; Growing social enterprise eco-system operating under Northern Roots licence	5 Businesses supported with CRF funding No Master license so not possible to sub license
Strong community engagement and involvement; Delivery of early implementation projects	2500 people took part in consultation and coproduction including building designs. Projects including bee keeping, creative writing, & Oldham College projects (despite Covid)
Planning approval for the full Northern Roots opportunity site	Commissioned full design and technical team leading to 3 planning approvals, for top 3rd of site, in greenbelt, July 2022
Legal infrastructure in place and operational	NR Company established Sept 2019 NR Charity registered Nov 2021
Inward investments secured and an investment strategy and pipeline	Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund, CRF, EFF, Halpin, GRCF – £12.45m
Contracts and commissioning contracts operational	Not possible without infrastructure

NORTHERN ROOTS

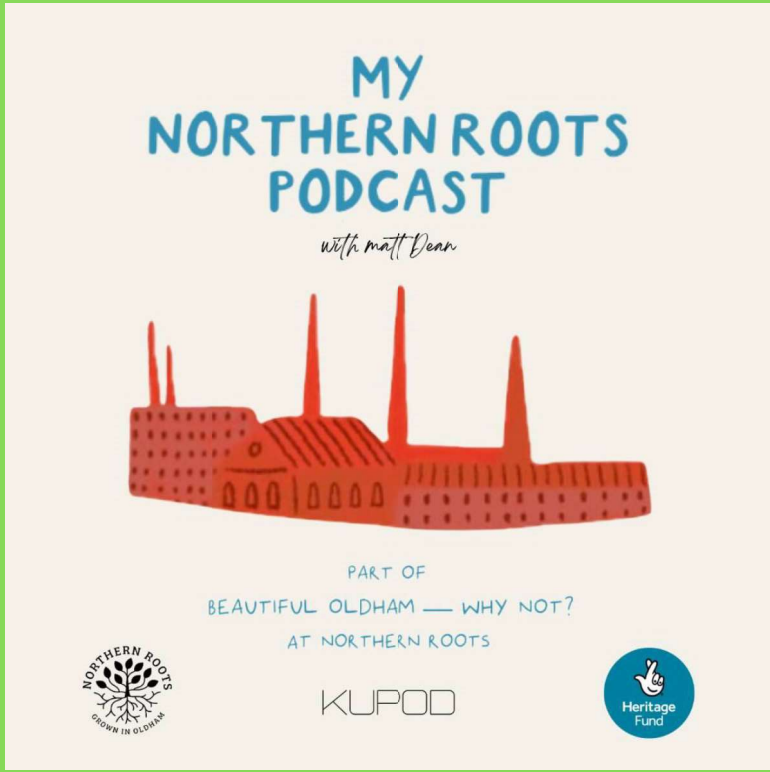
OPERATING AS A CHARITY (2022-24)

- Financially self-funding; no further revenue funding received from OMBC
- Attracted £2.75m funding from a variety of prestigious national and regional funders who could not fund an LA: EFF, NLHF, GF, NHSE, OCT
- Started to develop commercial and commissioning income; and corporate and philanthropy giving and 2030 Prospectus
- Invested £328k in 50+ local businesses and freelancers, in addition to local staff
- All staff employed by the Charity. In 2024 this peaked at 31 roles, of whom 19 from Oldham.
- Laid foundations for successful operations of the VC: Commissioned Business Modelling, Branding, Fund-raising, Biodiversiy Net Gain and Web Design consultancy. Produced Full Business Case and Full Business Plan. Just received funding to commission Marketing, Interpretation and Education consultancy.

NORTHERN ROOTS

OPERATING AS A CHARITY (2022-24)

- Established on Social Media with 7k followers and 35k monthly reach.
- Launched new brand and website.
- Local, Regional, National and International Media Coverage.
- Raised Oldham's profile nationally: Won Landscape Institute Award for Collaboration and Partnership, spoke at conferences in London, Lincoln, Leeds, Manchester; hosted visitors from Canada and Czech Republic; involved in multiple academic research projects.



NORTHERN ROOTS

OPERATING AS A CHARITY (2022-24)

- Supporting the Oldham Partnership – members of Local Motion, Green New Deal Board, Cultural Partnership Board, Town Deal Board, Cultural Education Partnership, GM Green Social Prescribing Steering Group, Oldham Food Board, Medlock Valley Nature Partnership.
- Partnerships with a wide range of local, regional and national organisations – environmental, cultural, academic, agricultural, educational, commercial.
- Approx 6,000 local residents engaged in activities on site and in surrounding communities in last two years
- Piloted community champion model of community engagement and co-design.

NORTHERN ROOTS

OPERATING AS A CHARITY (2022-24)

- Invested approx. £240k in Cabins, Garden and Phase 1 farm on Apiary Meadow, and Phase 2 farm.
- Worked with OMBC to secure revised planning permission for VC and FSC; secured reserved matters approval for Phase 2 farm and play area.

THE TEAM

ANY QUESTIONS?

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NORTHERN ROOTS