

# MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

## P L A Y B O X . CHORLTON



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# MSA LIVE 21

## Team

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## Partners

Working with the Chorlton PLAYBOX team is architectural practice i-Architect.

i-Architect is run by Jane Leach, an experienced chartered architect, a Green Register listed eco-refurbisher and a RIBA accredited Conservation Registrant. Her successful practice is based in Chorlton-cum-Hardy, South Manchester.

Jane is passionate about delivering eco-conscious designs for local homeowners but has extensive experience in the private and education sectors as she previously worked for the 4th largest architectural company in the world. Jane's talent is evidenced through her numerous housing awards.

i-Architect is working with this MSA LIVE 21 team on behalf of a community run project entitled the White House Project. The 'White House' is a building within Chorlton Park that is home to a number of community groups.

# Agenda

## Chorlton PLAYBOX.

Chorlton Park is located in Chorlton-cum-Hardy, just South of Manchester city centre. Community groups associated with Chorlton Park currently occupy a small space within an adjacent building locally known as the 'White House'. The space within this building is currently well used, but the community groups are limited by the space available. A solution to the lack of space within the White House is posed by a number of neighbouring cabins currently largely used as storage.

During this MSA LIVE project, the Chorlton PLAYBOX team has been tasked with generating concepts for the retrofit of this series of existing, but dilapidated cabins with the intention of creating a more usable community centre for the Chorlton population.

The aims of the project are to provide a space that bridges divides within the community; promote health and wellbeing among children and parents; and target food poverty, all with a focus on remaining environmentally conscious. To achieve these goals it is proposed to retain and reuse as much of the existing built fabric as possible, with any additional materials being sourced locally. As a community project, the Chorlton PLAYBOX team will need to design with budget in mind, but also propose building programmes that are capable of generating revenue to be self-supporting.

As this MSA LIVE project operates over both undergraduate and masters degrees there is ample opportunity for skill transference between students. As the organisational team the M Arch students wish to assist their undergraduate teammates as much as possible. Therefore, we have provided a number of workshops in both analogue and digital design techniques. To ensure all members of the team are encouraged to engage with the project, and to generate as many ideas for the White House Project as possible, we whittled four concept designs from week one of MSA LIVE into two more developed schemes in week two. This document highlights the development and outcomes of those two projects.

# Community Garden

## Designed by the People of Chorlton

Knowing that the White House Project wishes to target food poverty and health within Chorlton, this group has proposed that a community garden would be an appropriate use for the site and existing cabins. This garden could be an extension to the park that could provide much in demand allotment space, free for all to use and managed by the community.

The community garden is proposed to be accessible to all; relying on trust within the community to ensure its success. The proposed project would provide a blank canvas flexible enough for the community to use and rearrange in any way they see fit, as we recognise the importance of imagination. It is intended that those wishing to use the community garden will help to build it; giving them a sense of ownership over the site and therefore encouraging them to use the space respectfully.

Surplus produce grown in the garden will be sold to the public in veg boxes and from an on-site market at subsidised prices for those most in need. Alternatively, fruit and vegetables could be used by a community run cafe located on site.

The concept is designed to be environmentally conscious, which has been achieved through a concept for water harvesting canopies that will collect rainwater in underground tanks. The collected water will be used to irrigate the allotment and for all non-wholesome water required. This is a great way to reduce water consumption and bills for the centre. Secondly, pallet crates from compost deliveries will be re-purposed to create DIY furniture for the site. This furniture will be constructed by the community, again emphasising their contribution and connection with the project. Children of the community can also get involved with the furniture design process, helping them advance their social and practical skills.

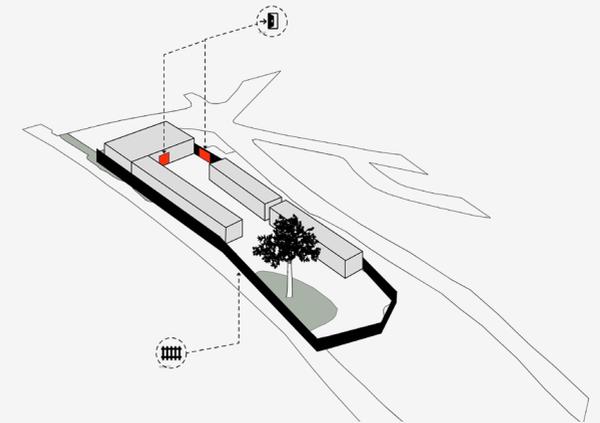
Image Top:  
Site Enclosure Diagram

Image Middle:  
Structural Additions  
Diagram

Image Bottom:  
Architectural Interventions  
Diagram

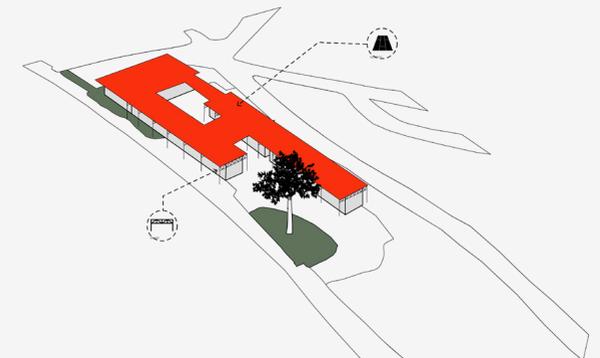
### Site Enclosure:

The site is currently bordered by a metal fence, creating a secure zone. This fence is in good condition and will therefore be retained. Existing entry points to the site will also be retained but will be enhanced to make them more obvious and inviting to passers by.



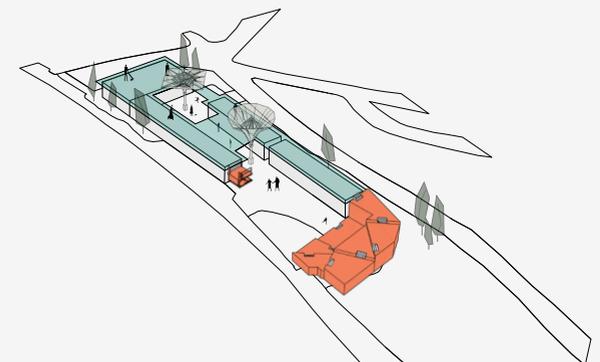
### Structural Additions:

The existing containers are in poor condition as leaks in the roof have degraded their structural integrity. We have proposed to restore the existing containers and integrate a new self-supporting roof deck. This will allow for extra weight from the planters to be supported on roof level and provide protection from rain below.



### Architectural Interventions:

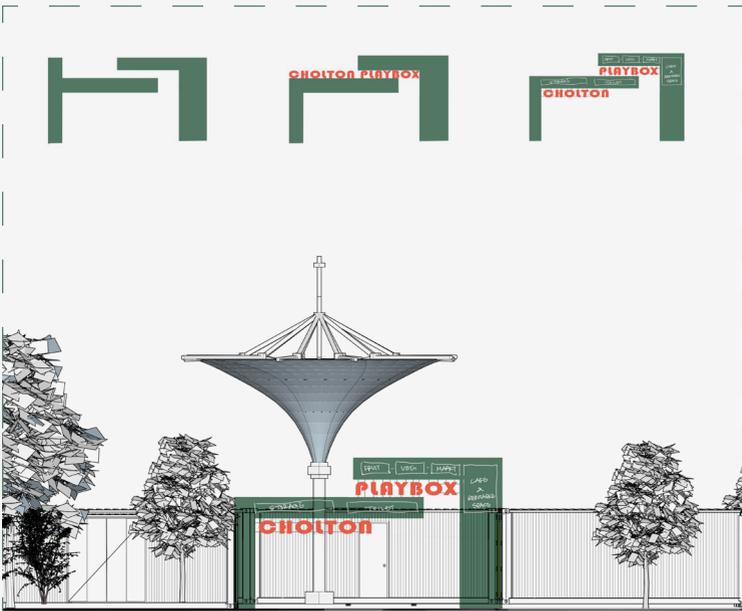
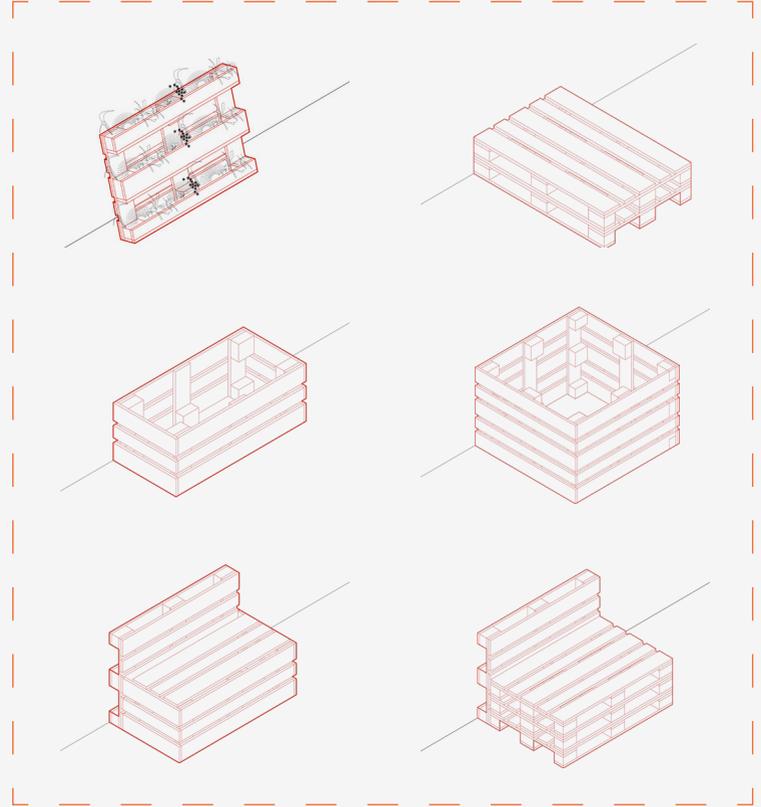
The first architectural intervention is the stepped seating at the north of the site. The seating creates various platforms for activities to take place, a circulation route up to the roof level and extra storage. The second architectural intervention are the canopies which are used for shading in summer months and rainwater harvesting all year round.





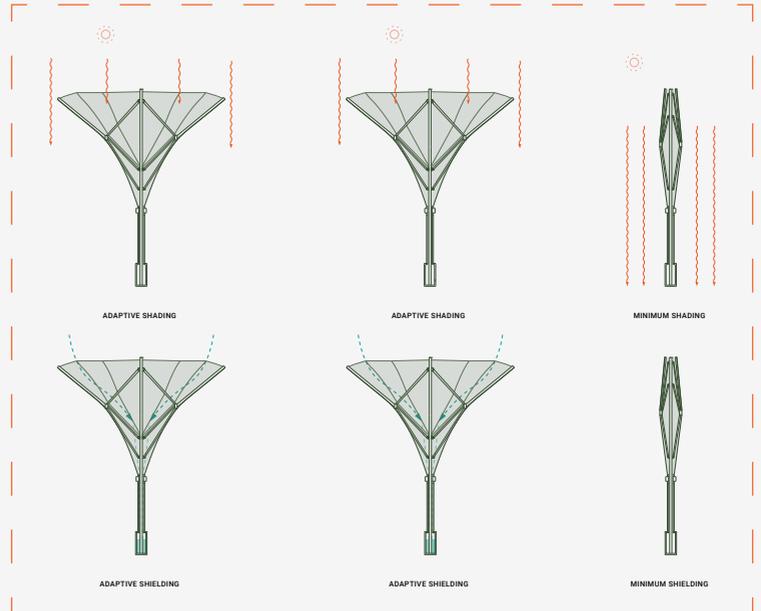
Concept collage depicting initial ideas for DIY construction and management

DIY Furniture constructed from re-purposed pallet crates



Entrance design concept inspired by the site's spatial arrangement

Water harvesting system and solar shading



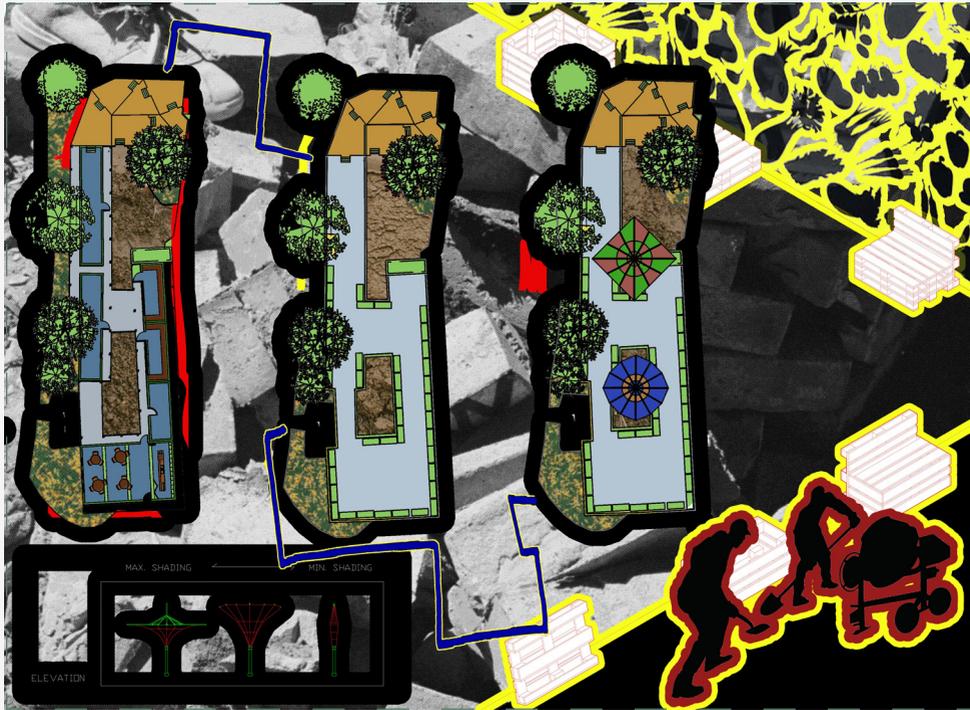


Image Right:  
Concept collage of primary  
entrance

Image Left:  
Proposed Floor Plans

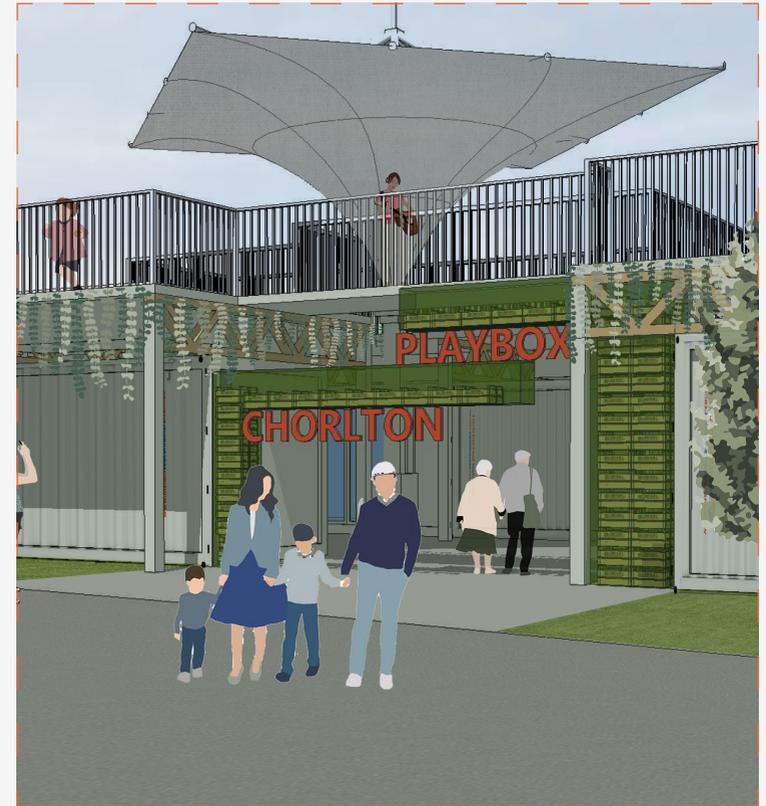


Image Right:  
Concept collage of roof  
level allotments

Image Left:  
Concept collage of internal  
courtyard



# Wellness Centre

## A Sensory Journey

Another approach to the re-use of the containers at Chorlton Park would be to provide a wellness centre that aims to address the mental and physical health of the local population.

The objective of this concept is to provide a series of multifunctional spaces that can support the groups already established at the White House, and be used by all members of Chorlton's population. The programme will provide spaces for physical activity and education as well as a relaxing escape from normal life. Visitors will be encouraged to experience all aspects of this programme through the scheme's natural circulatory route.

Sensory stimuli have a huge impact on the way people experience space and architecture. This proposal recognised the strength of this sensational experience in the creation of calming environments. Therefore, audio, visual, and textural elements will be introduced throughout the scheme to enrich the experiences of all ages and user groups.

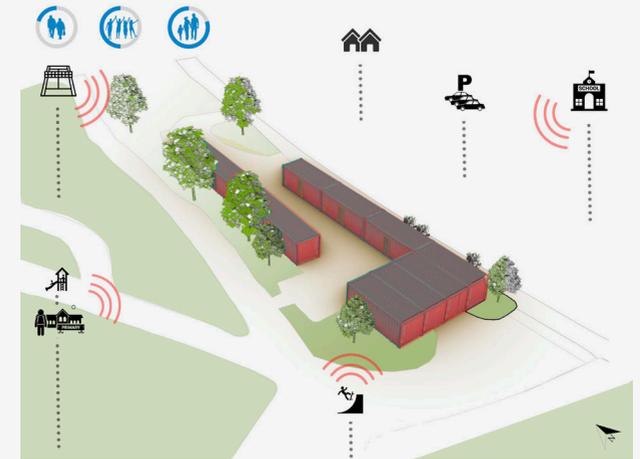
The scheme centres around a community cafe that would serve the wellness centre but also takeaway refreshments to the wider users of the park. The centre has the capability of generating revenue through this cafe but also through lettable space in the multi-purpose hall. This has the potential to

be rented by sports trainers, dance classes, arts classes and for private functions. An amphitheatre encloses the most Northern end of the site, supplying space for performances, seating and access to the container rooftops. Again, this space could be hired for all kinds of events.

In order to address the environmental sustainability of the project, this scheme proposes that recycled and reclaimed materials are used where possible in order to control costs and limit the project's embodied energy.

### Site Surroundings:

The neighbourhood surrounding the site is largely residential and there are a number of primary and secondary schools in the vicinity. The existing facilities in Chorlton Park, such as the White House, children's play area, and tennis courts already attract a diverse user group to the area. It is proposed to create a new facility that caters to as many of these groups as possible.



### Access and Views:

Access to the site is provided at two main points; through a gate from the park to the West and through the largest Southern container. This concept proposes to make use of the containers' roofs in order to increase the site's usable area but also to harness expansive views over Chorlton Park.



### Climate Analysis:

This diagram shows the natural elements affecting the design including the sun path, wind direction, and rainfall in Chorlton and how ventilation works through the proposed site. These natural influences dictate the need for a canopy over the cabins, however, this will need to be designed to retain as much natural daylighting as possible.

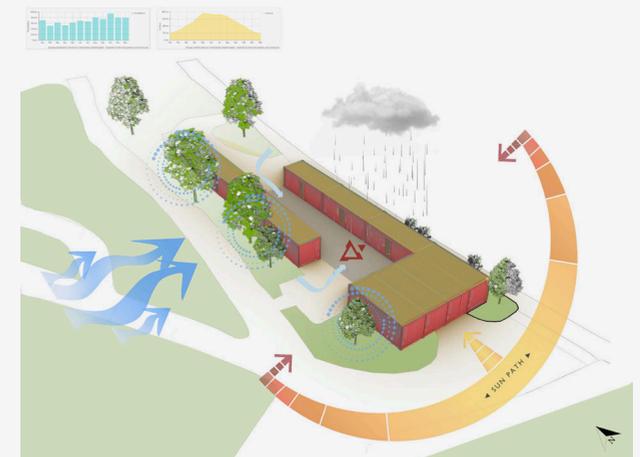


Image Top:  
Site Surroundings Diagram

Image Middle:  
Access and Views Diagram

Image Bottom:  
Climate Analysis Diagram



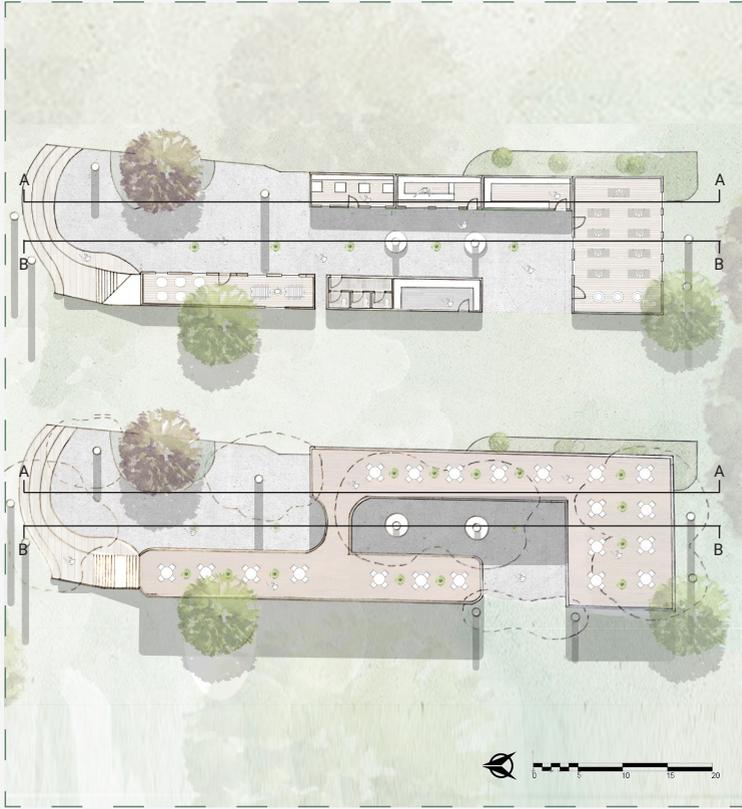


Image Left:  
Proposed Floor Plans

Image Right:  
Proposed Sections

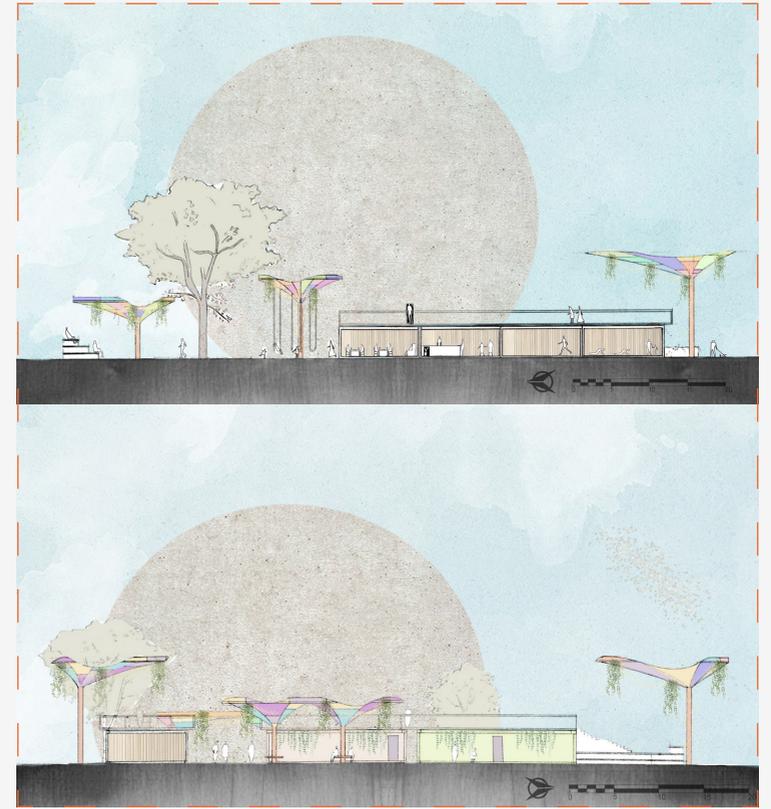


Image Left:  
Visual Journey

Image Right:  
Canopy Concept  
Visualisation



## ABOUT

Each year the MSA Live (formerly Events) programme unites M Arch. year 01 with B Arch. year 01 and 02 and M Land. Arch 01 in mixed-year teams to undertake live projects with external partners to create social impact.

## LIVE PROJECTS

All MSA Live projects are live. A live project is where an educational organisation and an external partner develop a brief, timescale, and outcome for their mutual benefit.

## SOCIAL IMPACT

All MSA Live projects have social impact. Social impact is the effect an organization's actions have on the well-being of a community. Our agendas are set by our external collaborators.

## EXTERNAL PARTNERS

MSA LIVE projects work with many organisations: charities, community groups, social enterprises, community interest companies, researchers, practitioners and educators.

## STUDENT-LED

Our MSA masters students take the lead in the project conception, brief development, delivery and co-ordination of a small project. Other cohorts join for an eventful 2 weeks of activities at the end of the academic year.

## KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Working in teams within and across year groups and courses; MSA students participate in peer to peer learning. In addition, collaborators, participants and students engage in the transfer of tangible and intellectual property, expertise, learning and skills.

## LARGE SCALE

This year approximately 600 students from 4 cohorts in MSA will work on 42 projects with partners.

## QUESTIONS

For questions about MSA Live 21 contact MSA Live Lead: Becky Sobell:  
**[b.sobell@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:b.sobell@mmu.ac.uk)**

## BLOG

**[live.msa.ac.uk/2021](http://live.msa.ac.uk/2021)**

## SOCIAL

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