

Member Bulletin - September 2025

Dear \$[UD:FIRST_NAME]]\$,

Welcome to the September edition of the IPM Bulletin

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill is being described as the “biggest transfer of power in a generation.” At the same time, the Government’s Backing Your Business report highlights a critical gap: many councils lack the place management capacity needed to drive renewal.

Together, these developments raise urgent questions: will devolution be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to empower places, or another missed chance that leaves communities behind? This is an issue we reflect on in the September IPM Bulletin, and it’s also something that Dr Nikos Ntounis, Editor of the *Journal of Place Management and Development*, would like to hear your views on through a potential *Viewpoint* contribution. Read more on all of the above in the Bulletin below.

We know that a lack of place management skills is a challenge - which is why IPM is here to help build the capability and capacity of the sector. This includes continuing to welcome sign-ups for our Postgraduate Courses in Place Management (deadline: November) and inviting expressions of interest in the proposed Apprenticeship in Place Management. Both programmes are designed to support structured career development and attract new talent into the profession, helping organisations build the skills they need to meet growing demands.

Alongside this, we are refreshing our Continuing Professional Development framework, aimed at supporting lifelong learning and career progression. Read more below.

If you are committed to professionalising your team and supporting their long-term development, we invite you to encourage your colleagues and peers to join the professional body for place managers and place leaders. Details of the different membership levels are available on our website: at: <https://www.placemanagement.org/membership/>.

Ian Harvey SFIPM
Head of Institute of Place Management

Up and coming events



Postgraduate Courses - Course overview with Dr Chloe Steaman and Professor Mihalis Kavaratzis

- **Date:** Thursday 4th September
- **Time:** 12:30pm - 13:30pm
- **Online**
- Open to IPM members and non-members

[Register here](#)



Masterclass: Place and Economic Development - with Professor Steve Millington

- **Date:** Wednesday 10th September
- **Time:** 11am - 3pm
- **Online**
- Open to IPM members and non-members

[Register here](#)

[Read more details about our events](#)

International Knowledge Exchange in Manchester



The Institute of Place Management, working closely with colleagues from the [Centre for Enterprise](#) at Manchester Metropolitan University, was delighted to support the recent visit of members of the Delta State House of Assembly, Nigeria - the legislative arm of the state government.

Throughout the week, elected Assembly members took part in a series of knowledge exchange workshops and seminars, gaining first-hand insight into why Manchester Met’s triple-accredited Business School is recognised globally for excellence in research, enterprise, and civic leadership. This prestigious status places the university in the top one percent of business schools worldwide, reflecting its high standards in teaching, research, and impact.

As part of the visit, IPM contributed to walking tours across central Manchester, led by [Professor Steve Millington](#), [Dr Jenny Kanellou](#), and [Rachel Nickeas](#). These tours encouraged delegates to explore how different places and spaces function for various stakeholders and the wider economy. At each stop, participants were invited to reflect and ask: “*What would this mean for us in our place?*” a question that sparked thoughtful and lively discussion throughout.

We hope the group returns to Delta State with a clear sense of how place management can be a powerful approach to driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth

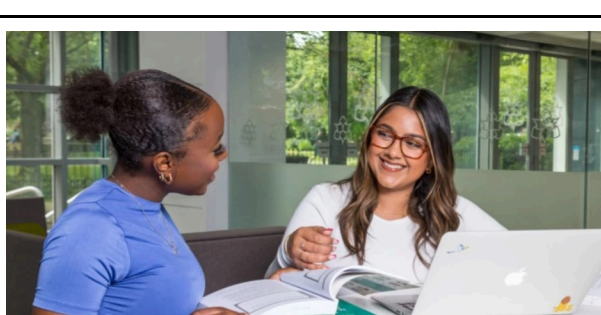
Explore a New Pathway into Place-Based Careers

Manchester Metropolitan University is working with IPM to building new career pathway through a possible Level 6 Degree Apprenticeship designed to support the next generation of professionals working to shape and improve towns, cities, and communities across the UK. The programme will aim to begin in September 2026, and we’re inviting managers and team leaders to a free online information session this September to learn more. This is a great opportunity to explore how the apprenticeship can support the development of early-career staff in place-based roles.

The session will feature insights from [Jo Carney MBA FCMI CMgr](#), **Head of Apprenticeship Business Development** at Manchester Met, on how the university works with employers to deliver impactful programmes. You’ll also hear from [Jeroen Roose-van Leijen](#), a current post-graduate student from the Netherlands, who will share a European perspective on place-based training. [Chris Gregory FIPM](#), Fellow of the Institute of Place Management and High Streets Task Force Expert, will present his research on the economics of towns and cities, drawing on over 25 years of experience.

Organisations of all sizes can benefit from generous funding support. Large employers can use their apprenticeship levy, while smaller organisations will have 95% of programme fees covered by government funding. We’re currently seeking 30 organisations to register interest in joining the first cohort. If you have team members ready to take the next step in their career, this is a valuable opportunity to support their growth.

[Register to learn more here.](#)



IPM highlights role of place management following devolution debate

On 2nd September, MPs debated the Second Reading of the [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#).

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner described it as the “biggest transfer of power from Whitehall to our regions and communities in a generation” (Hansard, 2 Sept 2025). In the end, and as expected the Bill passed its Second Reading by 365 votes to 164. It now moves to committee stage due to conclude by 12 November 2025.

But power alone is not enough. Without the right skills, funding, and a clear professional framework, devolution risks granting powers without the professional capability and capacity to use them effectively. The Government’s recent Backing Your Business report reinforced this message, highlighting that a lack of place management capacity and expertise within councils is a real barrier to local renewal.

New Government report recognises lack of place management skills as an issue

The Government's recent '**Backing Your Business**' report highlights the critical role that place management plays in supporting local economies. While the report acknowledges the barriers many small firms face - such as rising costs, skills shortages, and access to finance - it also recognises that these challenges cannot be solved in isolation from the places where businesses operate. Strong place management, through coordinated local leadership, business improvement initiatives, and partnerships between councils, BIDs, and communities, provides the framework for thriving high streets and town centres. Embedding place management into business support policy ensures that interventions are not just about individual firms but about creating the conditions in which local economies as a whole can succeed.

[Read the Backing Your Business report here.](#)

What Does the Devolution Bill Mean for Place Management? Members invited to share thoughts for the Journal of Place Management and Development

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill is being described as the "biggest transfer of power in a generation." But what will it mean for place management in practice? At the same time, the Government's Backing Your Business report has highlighted the lack of place management capacity in many councils as a barrier to local renewal. Taken together, these developments raise urgent questions about how powers will be used - and whether places have the skills and frameworks to make the most of them

We're inviting IPM members - both academics and practitioners - to share their perspectives in a **Viewpoint article** for the *Journal of Place Management and Development*. A Viewpoint is a short, opinion-led piece (2,000-3,000 words including references) that captures your reflections and insights on pressing issues.

For this call, we're especially interested in contributions that:

- Respond to the opportunities and challenges of the Bill
- Advance understanding of the capacity and capability of place stakeholders to create, curate, revitalise, promote, and sustain places at all scales

This is an ideal opportunity to connect your experience directly to an international audience of place professionals and researchers.

For more information - or to discuss an idea - please contact **Dr Nikos Ntounis** at ipm@mmu.ac.uk before *10th September*.

Research Spotlight: Exploring In-Store Experience Design on the High Street



YOUR BUSINESS. YOUR STORY.

HELP US LEARN FROM INDIE VOICES ON THE HIGH STREET



Dr [Ilze Mertena](#) is currently leading a British Academy-funded research project titled *Exploring In-Store Experience Design in the UK High Street Micro and Small Enterprises*. The study focuses on how independent high street businesses create engaging in-store experiences, the challenges they face, their use of digital tools, and the potential for business model innovation to support sustainability and growth.

As part of the project, Ilze has built relationships with six IPM members who are actively working to improve high streets across the UK. These experts are helping her connect with businesses in their communities, providing valuable insights and access to real-world examples.

We're proud to highlight and to say thank you to the IPM members supporting this work:

- **Chris Gregory** - Director, Heartflood (Knowle)
- **Elinor Seath** - Cultural placemaker, arts-led regeneration (Ramsgate)
- **Fiona McMillan** - Community Engagement & Business Improvement Officer, Go Forth Stirling BID
- **Graham Soult FIPM** Fellow and Retail consultant, CannyInsights.com (Durham)
- **Joe Barratt** - Fellow and National Director, The Teenage Market (Stockport)
- **Margaret Dale** - Senior Fellow and Chair, Keep Holmfirth Special; Co-ordinator, Holme Valley Vision Network (Holmfirth)

Ilze's research is a great example of how IPM members are contributing to academic inquiry and practical innovation in place management. If supporting independent small businesses is part of your work, Ilze would be delighted to exchange ideas as the project progresses. Get in touch at ipm@mmu.ac.uk.

Rethinking Place Management through Blackpool's North Pier

Last week, Blackpool's world-famous Illuminations once again lit up the promenade - a tradition that has sparked joy, debate, and cultural fascination for over a century. For the Institute of Place Management, Blackpool has long been a focus of research, with the Illuminations playing a central role in understanding how places are represented, experienced, and managed.

Over the past decade, researchers from IPM and Manchester Metropolitan University have explored Blackpool's public spaces and cultural identity, using the town as a lens to examine broader themes in place management. These insights were recently shared in a BBC Radio Manchester interview (1st September) with **Professor Steve Millington**, who drew directly on his research into Blackpool.

In the interview, Steve explained how the Illuminations reveal the importance of identity, tradition, and atmosphere in placemaking - and how IPM supports professionals working to make places better. His reflections underscore the value of cultural heritage and lived experience in shaping successful places.

You can listen back to the interview on Monday 1st September on the Joe McGrath Breakfast Show at **2hr 48mins and 40 seconds** via [BBC Sounds](#) and read more on the IPM website via: <https://www.placemanagement.org/news/posts/2025/august/research-shows-how-blackpool-offers-lessons-for-regeneration-and-leadership/>

Your thoughts on current place management and leadership issues as an IPM member

We love showcasing the expertise and insights of our valued members. If you have a story, research, or a project that might interest the wider IPM network, we'd love to hear from you! Whether it's a discussion topic, a LinkedIn feature to highlight your profile, or an update that deserves attention, we're keen to share your contributions.

Additionally, as an IPM member, you gain exclusive access to our members' area - a hub filled with valuable resources, networking opportunities, and industry insights. If you're not yet a member and would like to explore the benefits, feel free to get in touch to discuss membership options.

Let's continue to build connections and celebrate the fantastic work happening across the sector!

We're always keen to know your thoughts on current issues directly via [email](#) and in comments on our LinkedIn social media posts. Thank you for taking the time to read this bulletin, our next issue will be issued in June.

The IPM Team



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