

**PEOPLE'S
POWERHOUSE**



Mission in Motion

A strategy for
2025-2035



CONTENTS

- 01 INTRODUCTION Pg 03
- 02 ABOUT THE PROCESS Pg 04
- 03 VISION Pg 05
- 04 CORE BELIEF Pg 06
- 05 MISSION Pg 07
- 06 VALUES Pg 08
- 07 WHO WE WORK WITH Pg 09
- 08 THREE STRONG PATHS Pg 10-21
- 09 NEXT STEPS Pg 22



01. INTRODUCTION

Background:

We clearly hit a nerve when we said, 'You forgot to invite the women!' to those organising a 'Northern Powerhouse' event in 2017, we created quite a 'rumpus'.

But those headline grabbing messages ran much deeper. We quickly learnt a lot about who was 'in the room' talking about priorities for the North, and who wasn't.

That's what we set about changing, not giving a woman a token slot on a panel at an event. In a matter of hours, a group of women decided it was way past time to bring more diverse voices and experiences together to help shape the discourse, priorities and actions in the North.

We didn't know we'd still be here 8 years later, but here we are and we're needed now more than ever before.

Foreword:

It's been a turbulent time - Governmental changes, global pandemics and wars across the world. Closer to home, the cost of living and quality of life for millions of people remain a constant worry. Polls show that 75% of 18 - 30 yr olds are aiming to leave the UK, with 1 in 6 working people regularly skipping meals, 63% unable to pay their rent and a projected 3.8m people by 2028 unable to work due to long-term illness. (DWP, TUC 2024, YouGov 2024 and Financial Times 2025.)

With all of this in mind, People's Powerhouse is about ensuring the real life experiences of ordinary people are never overlooked when creating policies and decisions that affect people's lives. 'This is the North-Convention 2025' demonstrated a shared appetite for being bolder, for better collaborations and for more honest and truthful conversations.

We will continue to contribute towards enhancing the knowledge and awareness that is needed to enable

*more self-advocacy, more shared insights and we will find ways to strengthen the bridge between people and power. This strategy shows that we'll do this in three ways: creating better **platforms** for democratic participation, solidifying our **position** as a trusted partner alongside leaders to maximise impact, and by **sustaining** the organisation as a lean but stable mechanism.*

This a shared ambition for a fluid journey towards digging deeper, going further and achieving accurate and fair representation of what people want and need for themselves. I look forward to stronger partnerships with Northern people and political leaders from all parties to ensure that Northerners' insights are central to all new developments and opportunities. We hope you're as excited as we are about the future possibilities and will want to be part of the journey too.

Edna Robinson - Chair of People's Powerhouse

02. ABOUT

THE PROCESS

We've taken an Adaptive Planning approach towards developing a living strategy - one that evolves dynamically and can flex across an ever shifting landscape, while remaining loyal to the ethos and purpose of People's Powerhouse.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

If you're a positive change-maker, join this journey, as together we can go further.

Get in touch, if *you* want to partner with us.

03. Vision

“A North where people are empowered, heard, respected and are able to see their voices reflected in the policies and programmes that affect their lives.”



04. CORE BELIEF

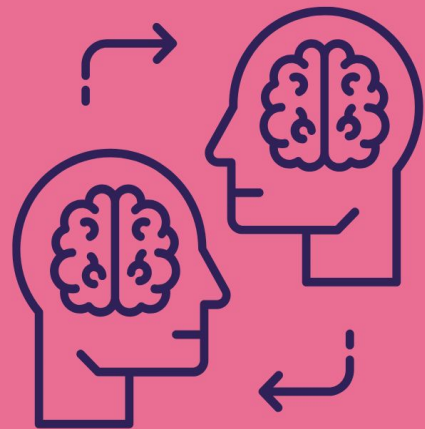
When Northern people's voices are 'actively' listened to in **a neutral way**, better decisions are made.



05. MISSION

To play a transitional role in helping people advocate for themselves.

Mission in motion



06. VALUES

These values (collected from views shared at conventions) underpin the approach People’s Powerhouse takes in all of its work:

Fairness

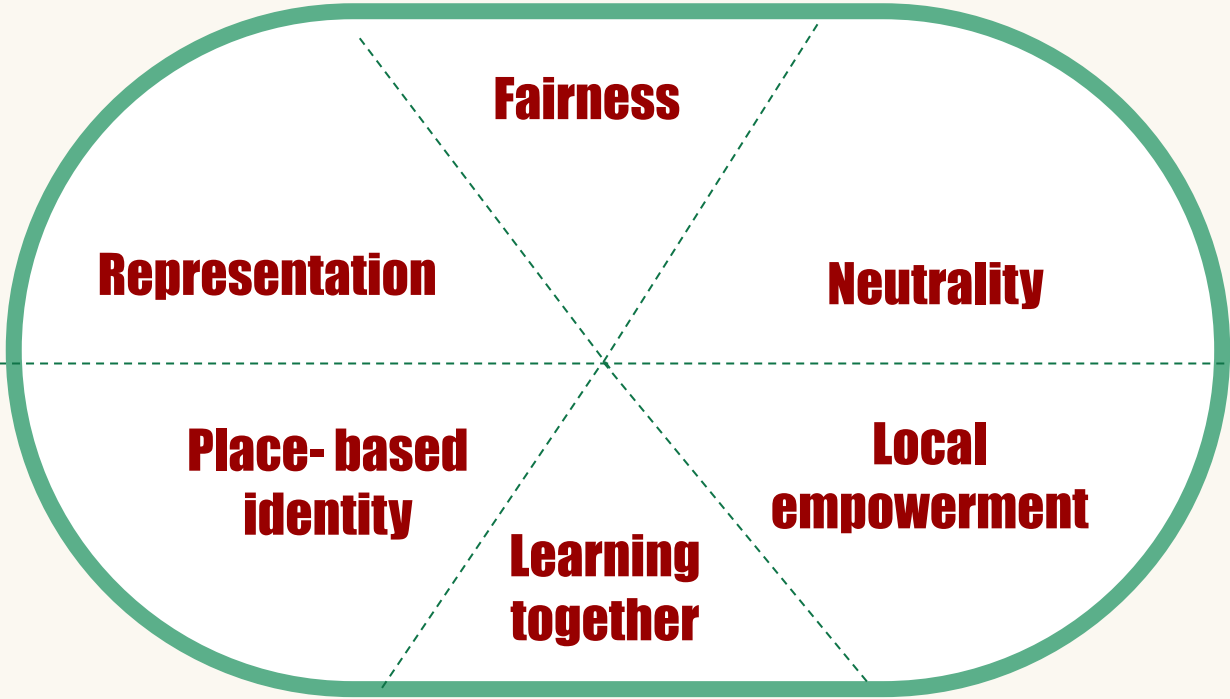
"A good economy that works for more people"

Representation

Neutrality

"A more inclusive North where our diverse voices and strengths are represented."

"Providing a bridge between diverse stakeholders, and those in power without agenda or bias."



Place based identity

"A focus on the value of all Northern places."

Learning together

"More collaboration, sharing and learning together."

Local Empowerment

"Devolution that genuinely includes local people."

07. Who we work with

Since 2017 People's Powerhouse has used the power of convening to bring together decision makers and people - those at the front line, living real lives, those who are innovating, have a different perspective and deserve to help shape the policies that affect their lives. We use a double lock system or an 'iterative approach' to ensure we continually check people's views.



**Education,
academics and
think tanks**

**Power
holders**

**Residents (Young and old)
Economically active/
inactive**

Culture/ arts

**Housing &
Health**

**Organisations
and businesses**

08. Three Strong Paths

We have chosen three strong paths to follow...

**New
Platform
concepts**

**Sustaining
People's
Powerhouse**

**Positioning
for greater
impact**

08. Three Strong Paths

Platform

"Being the mirror."

The focus here is to **explore, innovate and test** engagement 'concepts' that work together to form rounded information about people's lives, that we can '**mirror**' along the continuum of influence.

Sustaining People's Powerhouse

"Putting down strong and sustainable roots."

The focus here is to ensure **financial and organisational health and sustainability** for People's Powerhouse. We'll do that by **defining what is needed to strengthen ourselves 'from the inside'** and ensuring all support aligns with the ambitions of the movement.

Positioning

"Holding up the mirror."

The focus here is to **strengthen relationships** with **people who hold power** in the **North** (and further afield). We'll prioritise relationship-building with the **power holders**, and developing **partnerships with supporters of this work**.

08.Three Strong Paths

GOALS

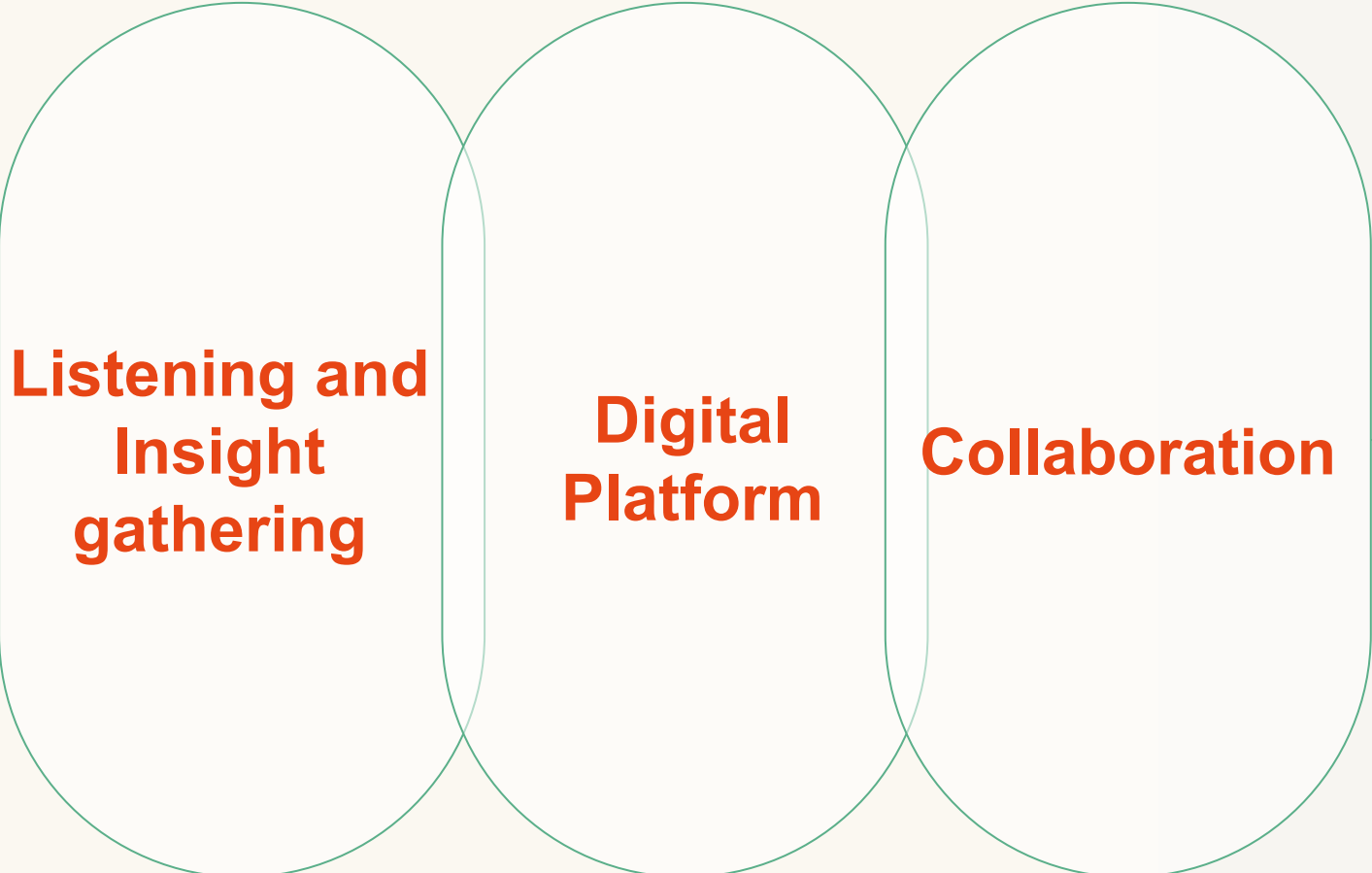
Over the next 10 years, we will...

- 01** Develop access to knowledge for those wishing to self advocate e.g. briefings, studies, reports.
- 02** Increase the number of people and power holder attendances at future conventions.
- 03** Focus on collecting soft intelligence - enabling those with lived experience to influence change.
- 04** Create information resources that demystify policy information - so those who wish to engage with political decision making - can.
- 05** Strengthen the lived experience representation at People's Powerhouse by recruiting additional Non-Executive Directors.
- 06** Increase the proximity between powerholders and ordinary people.

08. Three Strong Paths

PLATFORM

We will use a 'multi-dimensional approach to ensure people and leaders have choices in the way they connect.



**Listening and
Insight
gathering**

**Digital
Platform**

Collaboration

08. Three Strong Paths

New platform concepts

Listening and Insights

Listening to people, bringing insight to power.

We will ensure Northerner's views and needs are brought into decision-making by deploying a specialist, conversations - model, that we have developed.

We will achieve this by:

1. Building the capabilities of local people to research their own needs.
2. Creating safe spaces for people to talk candidly.
3. Pledging to bring relational depth and trust.
4. Sharing the insights and enabling Northerners to shape decisions.

08. Three Strong Paths

New platform concepts

Digital Platforms

Building political literacy with Digital and AI

We will endeavour to grow a more participative civil society through the incremental development of low-barrier tools.

These will be used to test, enhance and build people's opportunities to get involved in democratic processes and decision making.

We will work to expand the utilisation of new technologies, AI, AR and others; to multiply the reach of the organisation and the inclination of the people to enhance reciprocal exchanges.

Staff will be upskilled to rise to the opportunities presented through using such technologies and we will ensure that an ethical approach to its integration into the work remains uppermost.



08. Three Strong Paths

New platform concepts

Collaborations

Partnerships and collaborations

We will create lasting partnerships that connect people, resources, tools and power - to effect change.

The Journal

We will create a physical artifact - an accessible 'piece' that builds a collective story of Northern life: connecting places, spotlighting identity, and helping local voices be seen, heard, and celebrated far beyond their postcode.



08. Three Strong Paths Sustaining People's Powerhouse

What impact we'd like to see

IMPACT – THE DIFFERENCE THIS MAKES

**MORE PEOPLE ARE
CONNECTED IN THE NORTH,
SO THEY ARE AWARE OF
EACH OTHER AND HAVE
MORE OPPORTUNITY TO
DELIBERATE AND DECIDE
TOGETHER**

**MORE DIVERSE PEOPLE ARE
HEARD FROM, SO THAT THOSE
WITH INFLUENCE AND POWER
MAKE INFORMED, INCLUSIVE
AND BETTER DECISIONS**

**MORE DIALOGUE TAKES PLACE IN
MORE INTERESTING WAYS,
CREATING AND SHARING MORE
IDEAS IN THE NORTH**

**MORE COLLABORATION
STRENGTHENS SOCIAL
INFRASTRUCTURE AND CREATES A
POSITIVE CULTURE OF
COOPERATION**



**Goal: To improve people's lives through more
inclusive, diverse and therefore better decision
making about the North.**

08. Three Strong Paths Sustaining People's Powerhouse

Maintaining Neutrality

How we will operate

People's Powerhouse will operate as an independent convenor - a socially and politically neutral bridge between Northern people and the power constructs affecting their lives.

To achieve this, we will:

- seek financial support that will not compete with others,
- do work that satisfies the Company's operational principles - especially 'mission first', and,
- whenever possible, identify backing through partnerships, coalitions and collaborations - recognising that relationships and changes take time.

Capacity

We will respond to new opportunities and to grow ones of our own. The capacity of the organisation will remain fluid and lean to respond to these activities. The structure may expand or reduce to enable it to 'flex' accordingly. We will not seek out 'commissions' or funding to 'grow' the organisation for 'the sake of it', but we will develop a business plan to sustain the work.

Though small, the core team will be supported with access to the required skills, knowledge and resources to ensure this strategy can be realised. Moreover, the work environment will continue to be a market leader in terms and conditions, wellbeing and 'strengths-based' management.

08. Three Strong Paths

Positioning for impact

Partnering with leaders

Through the **collection of reliable insights** and by remaining people powered, we will strengthen the position of People's Powerhouse as a trusted partner.

We will ensure that leaders have **an ally** that will 'walk alongside them', galvanising local relationships and enabling them to bring better informed considerations to the decision making table.

We will **foster authentic connections** across neighbourhoods, collecting wisdom and equipping decision-makers with the soft intelligence they need to chart forward-looking strategies. By layering qualitative stories over quantitative trends, we will **provide a multi-dimensional view** of constituencies.

These actions will ensure that we **transform connections into forums for dynamic exchange**, ensuring voices are heard, insights are valued and every outcome reflects the power of people working together.

(Below - Mayor of Liverpool City Region Steve Rotheram, Liverpool City Council Leader Liam Robinson, Chair of People's Powerhouse Edna Robinson at This is the North Convention 2025.)



08. Three Strong Paths

Positioning for Impact

Partnering with people

We will develop and strengthen **pan-Northern relationships** that connect individuals, communities, and organisations across the North around the issues that matter most to people's lives. These networks will focus on key areas including **health and social care, arts and culture, skills and employment, Racial justice** and other critical themes such as housing, climate justice, and transport.

Collaborations with ordinary people, powerholders, VCSE's and others in the civil society space and beyond will aim to create **inclusive spaces for shared learning**, advocacy, and innovation.

These networks will serve as engines for grassroots insight, amplify underrepresented voices, and inform regional decision-making, ensuring that policies and investments reflect the lived realities and aspirations of Northern communities.

08. Three Strong Paths

Positioning - for impact

Providing the bridge

Looking Ahead: The Future of *This is the North*

As we move forward, *This is the North* will grow into a more accessible and connected bridge into regional change. Conventions will adopt a **dual-location hybrid model**, with events held simultaneously in **two different Northern locations**.



This approach will help to reach across the North, reduce travel barriers, and ensure more Northerners can take part, in person and online, wherever they are.

By hosting in multiple locations and linking them through live, interactive sessions, we aim to:

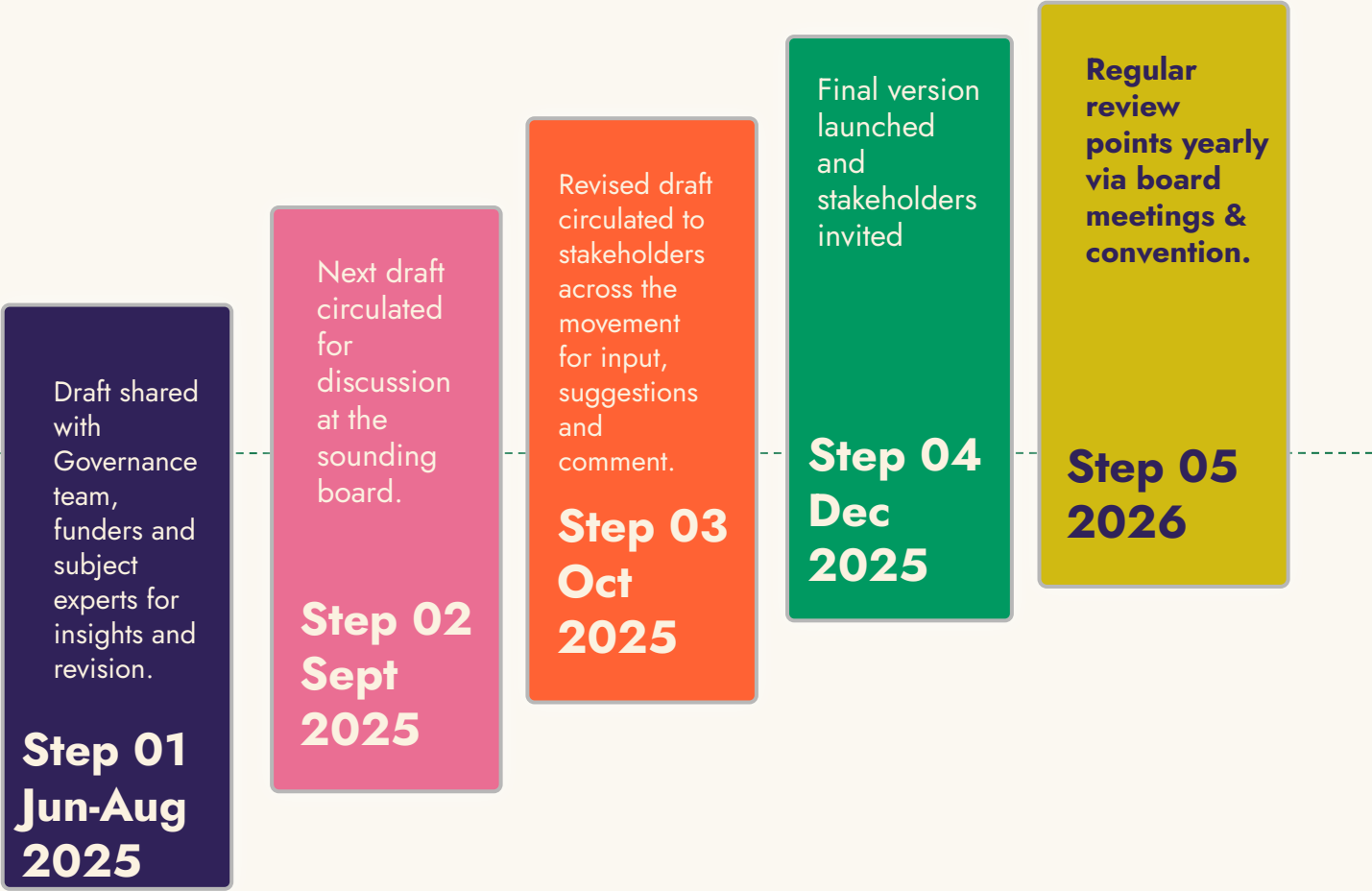
- bring together community voices and regional power holders,
- offer “**in-conversation**” **dialogues**, mutual exchange rooted in lived experience, and
- be **co-created with people, partners, communities & networks**, shaped by the people of the North, for the people of the North.

From setting the agenda to leading sessions, local voices will play a central role in defining what matters and what needs to happen next.

We will work to encourage a bold, people-powered approach and provide a warm place for changemaking, where community priorities drive the conversation, and the action.

09. Next Steps

Towards living the strategy.



The strength of the North lies in its unity, its people and its purpose.

People's Powerhouse has been there every step of the way - listening convening and championing those voices to ensure no one is left on the sidelines, so that what we build together reflects the realities of everyday life.

Draft shared with Governance team, funders and subject experts for insights and revision.

Step 01
Jun-Aug
2025

Step 02
Sept
2025

Step 03
Oct
2025

Step 04
Nov
2025

PEOPLE'S POWERHOUSE

