# Community dynamics and policing efforts shape Greater Manchester's landscape



In a series of noteworthy developments in Greater Manchester, various local stories highlight both community dynamics and policing efforts, amidst a transition of student living preferences.

At the Trafford Centre, Gandeys Circus' Carnival Spectacular is attracting a diverse crowd, including some unexpected visitors. Bippo, a clown associated with the show, recounted an unusual incident where several families arrived at the circus under the impression they were attending a football match at Old Trafford. Bippo explained, “The other day the ticket staff rang ringmaster Joel up to say that there were people at the box office asking if they were at Old Trafford,” illustrating the mix-up. Despite initially thinking it was a one-off, further inquiries revealed four other families encountered the same confusion. Bippo suspects a prank involving taxi drivers who misled fans into attending the circus instead of the stadium, stating, “They’re coming hoping to see Bruno Fernandes and they leave because they’ve got Bippo the clown instead.”

In policing news, Greater Manchester is set to receive an influx of 176 neighbourhood police officers as part of a larger initiative to bolster police presence across the country. Chris Slater reported that Chief Constable Stephen Watson expressed optimism regarding the increase, indicating that “it’s not just about numbers, it’s what you do with the numbers.” Of the new officers, 120 will be fresh recruits and 56 will be redeployed from various departments within the police force. This initiative aligns with Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s pledge to increase the total number of officers nationally by up to 13,000 by 2029.

Meanwhile, a significant shift is occurring in student housing preferences within Manchester. This trend is highlighted by plans from developer Vita to construct 861 student rooms around First Street, a project that is anticipated to gain council approval despite concerns regarding its impact on local residents in Hulme. Recent data shows that student numbers in Fallowfield, once the traditional hub for university accommodation, have dropped by 20% over the past four years, while city centre living among students has surged by nearly 50%. This shift has been attributed to the appeal of urban living and purpose-built accommodations, though the University of Manchester is still committed to developing its facilities in Fallowfield.

In other community-related efforts, Mayor Andy Burnham is pushing forward his initiative to transform Job Centres into Live Well centres across Greater Manchester. A £10 million allocation will support the establishment of these centres, which aim to offer comprehensive assistance in areas such as housing and health, facilitating a path for residents back into work.

In local governance, Oldham councillors have voiced significant discontent regarding the government's decision to maintain the Places for Everyone housing scheme. The decision, termed 'undemocratic' by opposition councillors, has incited concerns over the potential loss of green belt land in the region. Liberal Democrat group leader Howard Sykes responded critically, asserting, “This is now clearly the end of the road and Oldham borough is stuck with PfE.”

The local weather forecast indicates a sunny day ahead, with temperatures reaching 20°C, providing a pleasant backdrop for residents during the Easter holidays as many families seek outdoor activities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)