

OUR MANCHESTER STRATEGY – FORWARD TO 2025

1. Introduction

“Our future Manchester will be a place built by us all.” (Quote from resident response)

The Our Manchester Strategy 2016 – 2025 sets the long-term vision for Manchester’s future. It details the priorities that everyone in the city – our public, private, voluntary and community organisations, and our residents – will work on together to put Manchester in the top-flight of world class cities by 2025.

Over the first five years of the Strategy, Manchester has made significant progress towards its vision, going from strength to strength. However, some challenges remain, and the city now finds itself in a very different place due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

As such, halfway through the Our Manchester Strategy, we are resetting our priorities for the next five years to 2025, acknowledging - but looking beyond - the current challenges, to ensure we can still achieve the city’s ambition. Throughout summer 2020, we asked what Manchester’s priorities should be; over 3,800 people responded with their views. Their priorities are at the heart of *Forward to 2025*.

This reset has been overseen by the Our Manchester Forum, a partnership board of stakeholders from across the city who oversaw the creation of the original Strategy in 2015 and have been monitoring its implementation ever since. Our progress is reported annually in the State of the City report.

2. Our Manchester Today

“Manchester remains a place defined by its diversity, vibrancy and creativity. As we strive for a more equal and sustainable future, Manchester will continue to build upon its progressive and enterprising history.” (Quote from partner response)

Manchester has come a long way since the Our Manchester Strategy was written in 2015. Over the past five years, we have seen many parts of the city physically transformed, with new residential developments being built to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of people choosing to make their home here. As more businesses have invested in the city, further employment opportunities have been created for residents across all of our neighbourhoods. Our residents are better connected with improved transport and can access a diverse cultural and leisure offer. As we move towards a zero carbon future, great strides have been made in increasing recycling rates across the city and our parks have been protected and developed for all.

The annual State of the City report provides detailed analysis of the collective progress against the Our Manchester Strategy. Between 2015 and 2020, Manchester has seen:

- Population increases - Manchester is a growing and young city, with increasingly more people in the 25–39 age bracket now living in the city centre attracted by housing options and career prospects, culture and leisure amenities. The estimated population of Manchester is now 576,500 people, and the city has a 1% annual growth rate, which is twice the national rate.
- Improved education outcomes - as the population has grown, so too has the numbers of young people being educated in the city. Raising standards and attainment from primary education to further education has been a key success and driver of a more inclusive workforce. The percentage of Manchester schools judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted is now higher than the national average, and number of residents holding a level 4 qualification has increased to 43.7% in 2019 from 39.5% in 2015.
- Increased employment opportunities - Manchester's economy has strengthened and diversified, with the fastest growing sectors of science, research and development; business and financial and professional services; and cultural, creative and digital providing new investment and opportunity. Graduates entering employment in the city provide a competitive talent base for these sectors and an incentive for new businesses to relocate to the city. The number of jobs in Manchester increased from 357,000 in 2015 to 410,000 in 2019.
- Public service reform - since the first Locality Plan was developed in 2016, Manchester has made significant progress integrating health and social care in order to improve outcomes for residents, with the development of the Manchester Local Care Organisation, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning and the Single Hospital Service. The next phase will accelerate these changes.
- Diverse cultural offer - Manchester has an increasingly broad and inclusive range of cultural activities. In 2018/19, 185,943 people and 83% of our schools took part in cultural and creative activities, with events taking place across all of the city's wards. Central Library is the most visited UK library, with over 2 million visits in 2019/20.
- International outlook - Manchester is an internationally renowned place to study and a popular destination for domestic and international visitors, being the 3rd most visited city in the UK after London and Edinburgh. The visitor economy has been a key driver in the city's economic success and has been supported by Manchester Airport, an international gateway. Passenger numbers at Manchester Airport rose by 6.3 million from 2015 to peak at 29.4 million in 2019, before the significant reductions due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020.

Whilst Manchester has made great progress in many areas, some of the key challenges set out in the original Strategy remain; these will require continued focus in the coming five years:

- Health – despite some recent improvements, Manchester still has some of the poorest health outcomes in the country, including healthy life expectancy of below 58 years and high rates of deaths from cancer, heart and respiratory illnesses. Significant health inequalities, exacerbated by COVID-19, remain: life expectancy at birth is 7.3 years lower for men and 7.8 years lower for women for those who live in the most deprived areas of the city compared to the least.
- Poverty - in March 2019, an estimated 45,150 children under 16 lived in low income households (41%), compared to the national average of 30%. These high levels of deprivation impact upon physical and mental wellbeing and life outcomes.
- A fair economy - a gap remains between employee and resident wages remains, and too many residents are in insecure employment. Fewer Manchester residents (78%) earn at least the Real Living Wage, compared to those who work in the city (87%), and half of residents with no or low qualifications are unemployed. The claimant count for residents doubled between March and August 2020. Making sure residents can access good employment opportunities in the city is critical for developing a more inclusive economy.
- Affordable housing - Manchester has committed to delivering 32,000 new homes by 2025; this must include a range of affordable homes across the city to support diverse and inclusive neighbourhoods.
- Climate change - the city has committed to becoming zero carbon by 2038 at the latest and Manchester City Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019. We must speed up the pace of change for the city to play its role in addressing this global challenge and to deliver a green recovery from COVID-19.
- European Union Exit - the UK's departure from the European Union presents a challenge for many of our businesses and our communities.

In 2020, along with the rest of the world, Manchester faced the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19. Along with the significant health challenges this has brought, we have seen an increase in unemployment, greater usage of food banks, a rise in loneliness and mental health concerns, and a huge impact on our children and young people's education, training and employment opportunities.

Whilst this Strategy sets out the five year vision and reset of priorities for Manchester, we must work swiftly to address the most pressing issues arising from the pandemic as we continue to live with and recover from COVID-19. These are not new challenges for some of Manchester's communities, but they have been magnified. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, those on low incomes, and our residents with disabilities, due to higher incidences of underlying health conditions and occupational risks. As uncertainty and unemployment have increased, the importance of tackling underlying causes of poor health, deprivation and poverty - and ensuring equal access to the best education - have been brought to the fore.

However, COVID-19 has also highlighted Manchester's strengths and provides opportunities to drive further progress. Communities have come together to support each other. National recognition for key workers who kept the city moving is a platform to push for improved pay, working conditions and progression opportunities. Less commuting has led to cleaner air. More residents have been using the green space on their doorstep and supporting local businesses.

Manchester is optimistic that we can overcome these challenges and build on the opportunities. In the five years to 2025, as we work to support the city to recover from COVID-19 and achieve our long term aspiration, we must ensure that investment, growth and new opportunities reach all our neighbourhoods and communities, particularly those most in need. Manchester's success is fundamentally linked to Greater Manchester, the North West and Northern Powerhouse; the Government's plans to level up the country will present opportunities for investment and development to benefit the city and the wider North.

3. Our Future Manchester

"Our future Manchester will be bright, buzzing, strong and welcoming." (Quote from resident response)

"Our future Manchester will be a thriving, green city where people can realise their dreams for themselves and their families." (Quote from resident response)

As in the Our Manchester Strategy, our vision remains for Manchester to be in the top-flight of world class cities by 2025, when the city will:

- Have a competitive, dynamic, sustainable and fair economy that draws on our distinctive strengths in science, advanced manufacturing, and culture, creative and digital businesses – cultivating and encouraging new ideas
- Possess highly skilled, enterprising and industrious people
- Be connected, internationally and within the UK
- Play its full part in limiting the impacts of climate change
- Be a place where residents from all backgrounds feel safe, can aspire, succeed and live well
- Be clean, attractive, culturally rich, outward-looking and welcoming

This is an ambitious vision for Manchester. In order to successfully achieve it, we must refocus our priorities on key areas that address the challenges and build on the opportunities we now face whilst ensuring equality, inclusion and sustainability are at the heart of all we do. This ambition will only be achieved if everyone works together, building on Manchester's strong history of partnership working. That is why we asked the people of Manchester what the city's priorities should be.

During summer 2020, we listened to over 3,800 people tell us what Manchester means to them, what improvements they have seen, what challenges they face, and

what they want to see in the future. This built on conversations started across the city in 2015 and our continued commitment to maintain ongoing relationships with our communities. We listened to a diverse range residents and communities from all over the city: people who work, volunteer and study here; people who were born and raised here; and people who have chosen to make a life for themselves and their family here. We supported people to communicate in ways that worked for them.

We listened and overwhelmingly heard that people care about equality and making sure that everybody has the same opportunities to progress, and recognition that some need more support along the way to reach their full potential. We heard that being a fair and open city that respects and celebrates our differences matters to Manchester. We heard that we must not shy away from difficulties and need to find new ways of working to address the challenges facing our communities. From climate change to tackling inequality, there are some key priorities that matter to everyone in Manchester.

We heard that whether you live, work, study, volunteer or play in Manchester, we all have similar hopes and aspirations for Manchester's bright, buzzing, strong and welcoming future.

To achieve our vision, our communities want to see a renewed focus on:

- Our young people - providing investment, support, opportunity and hope for the future of the city
- Our economy - fulfilling opportunities for our residents as we create and attract a talented, globally competitive and diverse workforce
- Our health - tackling physical and mental health inequalities and ensuring fair access to integrated services
- Our housing - creating a choice of housing in liveable neighbourhoods across all of the city
- Our environment - pioneering zero carbon solutions and improving green space
- Our infrastructure – active, integrated, affordable and green transport system and improved digital connections

We heard that we can only achieve these things by taking pride in our people and place, and supporting everybody to live fulfilling, happy and healthy lives. This will mean bold action to understand and address inequalities to provide support where it is most needed. Working together and finding new, innovative solutions will be more important than ever as we strive to improve the city for our communities. Our future Manchester will be shaped by the past to deliver a better future for all.

4. Forward to 2025 - Manchester's Priorities

“Our future Manchester will be a place of support, encouragement and opportunities for people of all ages.” (Quote from resident response)

For Manchester to achieve its vision, we will refocus our efforts on these priorities to 2025. Throughout each priority runs Manchester's commitment to build a more equal, inclusive and sustainable city for everyone who lives, works, volunteers, studies and plays here. Only by working together can we achieve our priorities and vision.

A Thriving and Sustainable City

- We will maintain Manchester's vibrancy and ensure that all our communities are included in the life of the city, no matter their age, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, faith or socio-economic background.
- We will work to ensure Manchester has a strong, inclusive and innovative economy with diverse growth sectors, where our residents are recognised for their contribution via fair contracts and are paid at least the Real Living Wage.

A Highly Skilled City

- We will ensure that all of Manchester's young people have access to good quality education and will support them to be work-ready.
- We will continue to support all our residents to learn, progress, upskill and retrain so they can access the city's current and future employment opportunities.

A Progressive and Equitable City

- We will strive to create a truly equal and inclusive city, where everyone can thrive at all stages of their life and can quickly and easily reach support to get back on track when needed.
- We will improve physical and mental health outcomes and ensure good access to integrated health and care services across the city.

A Liveable and Low Carbon City

- We will create sustainable, safe, resilient and cohesive neighbourhoods, with more affordable housing, good quality green spaces, and accessible cultural and sporting facilities.
- We will achieve our zero carbon ambition by 2038 at the latest via green growth, sustainable design, low carbon energy, retrofitting buildings, green infrastructure and increasing climate resilience.

A Connected City

- We will enable increased walking and cycling, as well as continuing to develop an integrated, accessible, safe and green public transport system across the city and beyond.
- We will become a digitally inclusive city, with better digital infrastructure, access to digital technology and strong digital skills.

5. Delivering and Monitoring Our Progress

“Our future Manchester will be a city that all other cities aspire to be.” (Quote from resident response)

“Our future Manchester will be a beacon for a better world.” (Quote from resident response)

As a strategy for the city of Manchester, successfully reaching our ambition will require strong partnership working and collaboration. To achieve the priorities set out in *Forward to 2025*, Manchester must continue to work in an Our Manchester way. Success depends on our people and organisations coming together so that their collective knowledge, skills, effort and passion can be harnessed. We must continue to put people first; listen, learn and respond; recognise the strengths of individuals and our communities; and work together to build relationships and create conversations.

Forward to 2025 is a high-level framework for action. There are a number of detailed key plans that sit underneath this Strategy which will support its delivery:

- *Developing a More Inclusive Economy – Our Manchester Industrial Strategy* – establishes priorities for the city to create a more inclusive economy that all residents can participate in and benefit from. Intrinsic to delivering this is are:
 - *Powering Recovery: Manchester Economic Recovery and Investment Plan*; and
 - the *Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter*.
- *Work and Skills Strategy* – aims to develop a work and skills system that meets the needs of all businesses, and enables residents from all backgrounds to obtain the skills and attributes employers require.
- *Children and Young People’s Plan - Our Manchester, Our Children 2020 - 2024* - sets out how the city will build a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for children and young people.
- *Manchester: A Great Place to Grow Older* – Manchester's vision to continue being an Age Friendly city.
- *Family Poverty Strategy 2017 – 2022* - aims for everyone in the city to have the same opportunities and life chances, no matter where they are born or live.
- *Our Healthier Manchester Locality Plan* – details the strategic approach to improving health outcomes for residents whilst creating sustainable health and care services.

- *Manchester Population Health Plan 2018 – 2027* - long term plan to tackle Manchester's entrenched health inequalities.
- *Local Plan* – the spatial framework for the city setting out development guidance; due to be published in 2023.
- *Residential Growth Strategy 2015 – 2025* – guides Manchester's approach to housing development and supply.
- *Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020- 2025* - framework for tackling climate change and reducing the city's carbon footprint
- *Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy* - the city's headline actions for improving green and blue infrastructure.
- *Digital Strategy* – a new plan setting out how Manchester will achieve its digital ambitions.
- *City Centre Transport Strategy* - identifies key transport policies and opportunities for future delivery.
- *Clean Air Plan* - sets out proposals to decrease air pollution in Greater Manchester.
- *Greater Manchester Strategy* - the city region's ambition for making Greater Manchester the best place to grow up, get on and grow old.

The Our Manchester Forum will continue to be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Strategy and monitoring its progress, which will be reported annually via the State of the City report.