## Our Manchester

Strategy 2025-2035





### **Contents**

Foreword	5
Manchester in 2025	6
What makes you proud of Manchester?	8
The big challenges	12
Working together	14
Our vision	17
Our priorities	18
What our priorities mean in practice	21
Tracking our progress	46



### Foreword



We launched the original Our Manchester Strategy in 2016, with a 2020 reset that put equality, inclusion and sustainability at its heart. Since then, we've collectively made huge progress to become a place that Mancunians are proud of: a city offering great opportunities – admired and respected around the world.

This new Our Manchester Strategy sets the city's overarching priorities for the next ten years – priorities chosen by the many thousands of you who, in 2024, told us your ambitions for your city.

It is a deliberately ambitious strategy, because Manchester is clearly ambitious about its future: you want to see our people and organisations working together to make your aspirations become reality.

You've said you're proud that Manchester is a diverse and inclusive city, full of people who are creative, productive, kind and supportive. As we embark on the next ten years of Manchester's journey, we must continue to build on our unique strengths to become a safe, clean and green, well-connected, modern, must-see city where every resident knows that they belong and feels the benefit of economic growth and the changes to come.

You've said what you want Manchester to be. Let's make your brilliant ambitions inspire us all to come together to create new and different ways to build the best possible future for our city in the next ten years.

#### **Councillor Bev Craig**

Leader, Manchester City Council April, 2025

## Manchester in 2025



A lot has happened in the ten years since we launched the first Our Manchester Strategy, and we've made good progress towards our original goal of joining the top-flight of world-class cities.

Between 2015 and 2024, Manchester's population increased by an estimated 92,000, meaning that 627,700 people now call this city home. We're a more diverse city, over 43% of residents describing themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic community. We are better educated, 77.3% of our people having a college-level qualification and far fewer people having no qualifications. With the fastest-growing economy in the country, our city is creating more better-paid jobs and opportunities for residents to earn more and get on. Since 2015, the city has added 103,000 new jobs, and our residents' average wages have increased faster than nationally.

In the past ten years, the city has also overcome some huge challenges. The Manchester Arena attack in May 2017 was a horrendous tragedy, but also showed a city united in grief, supporting the families who lost loved ones and all those affected.

The Covid pandemic was a global event that hit Manchester particularly hard; nothing can ease the loss of loved ones or the lifechanging effects our residents still feel. Yet we found hope in our city's resilience, and we are bouncing back stronger than ever.

Manchester has achieved some great successes:

- More schools, colleges and early years settings are judged to be better than ever
- Investing in people through becoming a Real Living Wage City, UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning and UNICEF Child Friendly City
- Hosting major national and international sporting, cultural and business events
- Investing in culture through new venues like HOME, Aviva Studios and Co-op Live, and updating The Whitworth, Manchester Jewish Museum and Contact, all celebrated in the newly established Manchester Cultural Awards
- Investing in the wider city through the regeneration of places like Ancoats, Beswick, Collyhurst, Miles Platting, New Islington and Wythenshawe
- Being recognised as one of the best places in the world to visit, work, learn or set up a business.





Union Square waterfront visualisation

# What makes you proud of Manchester?

In spring 2024 we gathered over 10,000 responses to this question from people across the city.

We've been careful to listen to as many voices as possible – including those who say they aren't proud of their city (yet, or any longer). We've also listened to how our diverse groups and communities value different things about the city's life and character.

By listening to everyone, we can shape a future Manchester that we can all feel part of and proud of.

Here's a flavour of what cropped up most:



## "This city's got heart."

Our Manchester | Strategy 2025–2035

The **people** – their welcoming approachable character, openminded attitude, and how we pull together when it's tough.



### "Art that's everywhere, for everyone... music culture and football vibes."

Our impact on culture, music, sport and creative industries.

### "Adapting to the new, while recognising our world-leading history."

The **growing**, modern, busy, public transport-fed, innovative vibe of the city – but with credit to our pioneering industrial past.



### "Punching above its weight."

An international reputation for the blue/red sporting rivalry, music, top-rank universities and as a global business HQ.



"Different people together... being accepted for what you are."

**Opportunities** – for all generations, faiths, lifestyles and cultures to get on, and do well.

## "We're hard working - and we've accomplished a lot."

**Economic growth** outpacing other UK cities, balancing and complementing the capital's dominance, showing how regional leadership works for the whole nation.



But the most common responses – in all the thousands we collected – were about our **people**:

### kind helpful supportive

amazing people who care about each other



proud, so it should! Welcome to the future



And if that makes you

Manchester

# The big challenges



While we have had much success, we know there are still some big challenges for Manchester to overcome.

#### Inequality

We need to work together to close the gap between Manchester residents who are doing well and those who are not. Some of the biggest gaps are between things like how healthy people are, how long they live, and how much money they earn. The Our Manchester Strategy aims to improve the lives of everyone in the city, not just those already doing well. Closing these gaps is crucial to making Manchester the fairer place we want it to be.

#### **Quality of life**

We also need to work together to make sure that every person in Manchester experiences positive improvement in their life. This could mean feeling happier or healthier, having more money to spare, or enjoying living here more. We need to connect more Manchester residents to the opportunities in their city. The Our Manchester Strategy aims to take everyone in the city along together on the next phase of Manchester's journey.

#### Housing

Our growing population has created huge opportunities, but with a national and regional housing shortage affecting every council, there is more pressure on the city's housing. We have an ambitious strategy to build many more homes, many of them genuinely affordable and low carbon. We are also working to end homelessness in the city. The Our Manchester Strategy aims to have enough good-quality and affordable homes in attractive neighbourhoods that are well maintained with good facilities, public services and green spaces.

#### Climate change

Climate change is a global challenge, and Manchester has an important role to play in tackling it. We have already adopted an ambitious target to be a zero carbon city by 2038 and have worked hard to reduce our carbon emissions. But we know that some effects of climate change are already being felt here in our city and we must be prepared to manage these effects. This needs to be done in a way that is fair to everyone and that has wider benefits for our city through improved health, cleaner air, and better public spaces. The Our Manchester Strategy aims to reduce our carbon emissions and prepare for a changing climate.

## Clean, green and safe neighbourhoods

You've told us that you feel strongly about the places you live, but that you don't always feel proud of your neighbourhoods. We know we've got to get all parts of the city clean, green and well kept – and make it feel safe when you're out and about. The Our Manchester Strategy aims to improve our neighbourhoods – making sure they look their best and feel safe and secure, and that every area of the city has a plan to make things even better in the future.

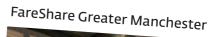
## Working together

One of Manchester's greatest strengths is its people and the partnerships they create. We are a city built on working together, where individuals, groups and organisations come together to tackle challenges and seize opportunities. From our history as a powerhouse of industry, to our present-day vibrant, modern city, this collective strength has driven our transformation.

What makes Manchester unique is its ability to build relationships that cut across different sectors, communities, and perspectives. It's not just about having strong organisations – businesses, charities, and residents – it's about how they work together to achieve common goals. These partnerships aren't passive. They're active, hands-on, and rooted in Manchester's trademark approach of working pragmatically to get things done.

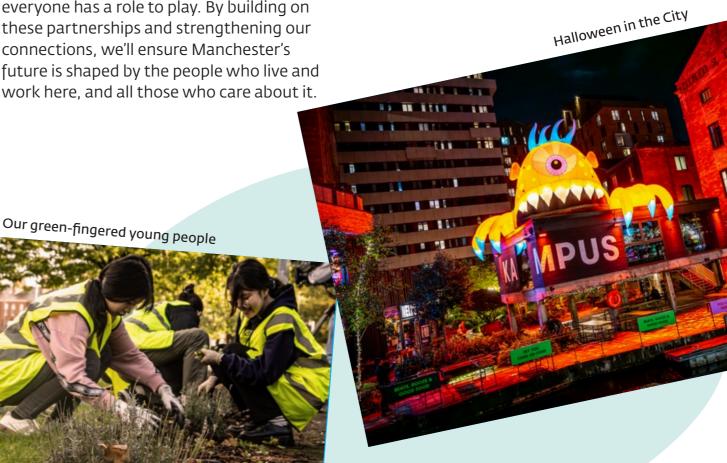
This spirit of collaboration is crucial for the success of the new Our Manchester
Strategy. No single organisation – including the Council – can deliver this strategy alone. It must be a shared mission, owned and driven by the whole city – residents, businesses, voluntary and community organisations, and public services – all working side by side.

The belief that when we work together, we can achieve something much greater than the sum of our parts is what makes Manchester's approach so powerful. From local residents to international investors, everyone has a role to play. By building on these partnerships and strengthening our connections, we'll ensure Manchester's future is shaped by the people who live and work here, and all those who care about it.















After the best start in life, Manchester people in 2035 will enjoy more healthy, happier years.

Mancunians – adopted and home-grown – will be prouder still, celebrating their city.

They'll feel valued and respected, supported to play their part in their city's life, and use their unique strengths to make a Manchester we can all be proud of.

Manchester people will share in a growing and more equitable economy that brings better jobs and prospects, developing and enjoying new technology that boosts public services and quality of life.

Manchester will be an even more must-see city, with amazing things to do. Our neighbourhoods will be clean and green, with good-quality affordable homes and good public services. Mancunians will feel safer indoors, outdoors and online.

We will stay on track to reduce Manchester's carbon emissions and manage the impacts of climate change. Our public transport will be greatly improved; it will be quick, cheap, clean and reliable.

And our world-renowned sport and culture will be there for everyone, everywhere across the city, earning global recognition, attracting international visitors and winning Manchester the admiration it deserves.

### Our priorities

Manchester will focus on 12 things over the next ten years. These priorities are grouped into three themes:

**Our people** is about everyone who calls Manchester home, making sure that they can live their best lives.

**Our neighbourhoods** is about the places we live, making sure they're places to be proud of.

**Our city** is about the things that will secure our future, which make us one of the best places in the world.

#### Our people will:

- Be happy, healthy and active from childhood to adulthood
- 2. Have a great education and be able to learn new skills as they grow older, so they can get the best jobs
- 3. Be proud of our diversity, feel valued and included, knowing they belong
- 4. Participate, engage, and influence decisions about their communities and neighbourhoods
- 5. Be safe in person and online.

#### Our neighbourhoods will:

- 6. Have enough good-quality, genuinely affordable homes
- 7. Be attractive and well kept with good facilities, services and green spaces.

#### Our city will:

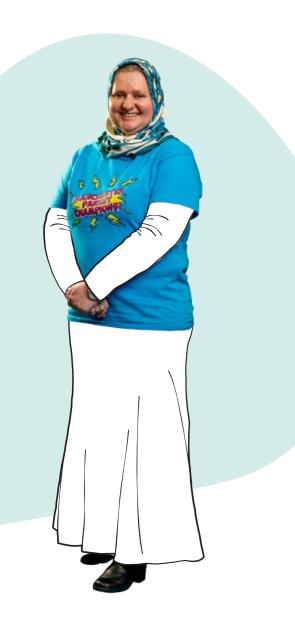
- 8. Have a growing economy that provides jobs and equal opportunities for everyone
- 9. Adapt to a changing climate and rapidly reduce carbon emissions
- 10. Have world-renowned things for everyone to see and do, showcasing our talent for sport and culture
- 11. Have reliable transport that gets you where you want to go, quickly, cheaply, safely and cleanly
- 12. Embrace technology to achieve our aims, safely and ethically.













What our priorities mean in practice

#### Our people

## Priority 1: Our people will be happy, healthy and active from childhood to adulthood

For many years, the health of people in Manchester has generally been worse than in England's other big cities. This priority is about people here feeling – and being – healthier and happier. It is also about tackling the unfair, preventable differences in health between different groups and communities.

We will make this happen by:

- Improving physical and mental health and wellbeing so Mancunians live longer in good health
- Reducing health inequalities in Manchester
- Making health and care services more accessible for all communities and residents
- Working with people to lead healthier lifestyles: things like staying connected to others, keeping fit, eating well
- Offering easier-to-use advice and help
- Providing places in Manchester where people can be active, connect with others, and breathe fresh air
- Continuing to make Manchester an Age-Friendly City where people can age happily with equality, respect and independence.



# Priority 2: Our people will have a great education and be able to learn new skills as they grow older, so they can get the best jobs

Education is important to everyone's future. In 2024, Manchester was accredited as a UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning. This provides a platform for adults to learn, as well as international connections to cities that are doing things we can learn from.

Today, more and more of Manchester's schools are classed as better than ever, and we have world-leading universities and fantastic adult learning opportunities. However, not all Manchester residents have equal access to good-quality education and opportunities to learn new skills throughout their lives: some residents face barriers to learning and achieving their full potential.

Our goal is for everybody to have an excellent and inclusive education and to continually acquire new skills, from early childhood through adulthood to old age. This not only enhances personal fulfilment, but also strengthens our city's workforce and economic resilience.

We will make this happen by:

- Investing in Early Years support and Family Hubs so Manchester children have the best possible start in life and are ready for school
- Further improving the quality and standard of education in Manchester schools and Early Years settings for the benefit of all our children and young people
- Continuing Manchester colleges' provision of more high-quality learning places for young people and adults, with a greater range of courses
- Continuing Manchester universities' delivery of world-class education with significant numbers of graduates remaining in the city region
- Connecting Manchester schools, colleges, universities and training providers with employers to build better links between learning and work

- Delivering the Skills for Life programme, ensuring top-quality opportunities for children and young people inside and outside the classroom
- Further improving our lifelong learning offer with Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES) as its anchor, following our recognition as a UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning.



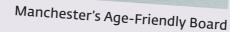
# Priority 3: Our people will be proud of our diversity, feel valued and included, knowing they belong

Manchester has a long and proud history of championing equality. We celebrate diversity and welcome people from across the world. This commitment to equity, inclusion and human rights is in our DNA. Fairness and equity are the bedrock of our city and its values.

Manchester has made huge progress in recent years. We're a global player on the world stage, but too many of our city's residents feel they are not able to fully share in this success. Communities that experience discrimination and disadvantage, such as racially minoritised or disabled people, often fare worst. It's evident in many aspects of life, and something many people told us when we spoke to them about this strategy. Our goal is for the city to support residents to come together to build a stronger and more resilient Manchester.

- Improving services so they are more inclusive and accessible for all communities of Manchester
- Standing up to racism and discrimination in all its forms, equipping our workforce to do this through effective training and development, supporting our communities to raise issues, and ensuring these are acted on
- Taking action to ensure the workforces of major employers more fully reflect the diversity of Manchester's communities
- Tackling inequalities in outcomes between the different communities of Manchester.





# Priority 4: Our people will participate, engage, and influence decisions about their communities and neighbourhoods

Manchester thrives when its residents can actively participate in shaping their communities. We recognise the incredible value of Manchester's grass-roots organisations in empowering people and connecting public and private sector organisations to our communities. And we see the need to make sure those organisations are well supported.

However, not everyone feels they have a voice in local decisions, and people don't always feel their voices have been heard. This leads to a disconnect between communities and the changes affecting them.

To address this, we're committed to making sure every resident feels supported to engage and influence decisions about their neighbourhoods and the city as a whole. This means providing opportunities for residents from all our communities to have a say and get involved in the work that makes a difference to them and to Manchester.

We will make this happen by:

- Funding grass-roots and community organisations that engage with and empower our communities, using funding such as Our Manchester VCS Grants
- Increasing the voice and influence of communities in decision-making and how services are run
- Being recognised as a UNICEF UK Child-Friendly City where the voice of children and young people inform the future of our city
- Doing more to engage people in new ways, building on work such as Making Manchester Fairer, Community Health Equity Manchester, and the Anti-Poverty Insight Group.



Manchester Youth Council



The launch of Manchester's Walksafe app

## Priority 5: Our people will be safe in person and online

Feeling safe and secure where we live, where we visit, and online is essential for wellbeing. However, challenges like crime, antisocial behaviour, abuse and digital threats can undermine this sense of security. This is something that many people mentioned when we spoke to them about this strategy.

Our goal is to create an environment where everyone in Manchester feels safe, both in their communities and online. This involves reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, promoting responsible online behaviour, and providing support for those affected by safety concerns. It also means the Manchester Community Safety Partnership and organisations like Greater Manchester Police tackling the root causes of problematic behaviour by focusing on early intervention and prevention.

We will make this happen by:

- Tackling neighbourhood crime and antisocial behaviour together with local communities through the Manchester Community Safety Partnership and the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Action Team
- Working through the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership to keep young people and adults safe and prevent them from being exploited
- Focusing further on prevention and early intervention to support children, young people and their families
- Making sure that front-line workers are trauma-informed so they can recognise and respond to trauma
- Supporting Greater Manchester Police to tackle serious harm and violence
- Improving access to Manchester's drug and alcohol treatment service and tackling the link between drugs, alcohol, crime, and antisocial behaviour.

#### Our neighbourhoods

#### Priority 6: Have enough goodquality, genuinely affordable homes

A growing local population has added to a national and regional housing shortage and to multiple problems affecting the country's housing in the past decade, putting pressure on housing affordability and availability. Many Manchester residents find it hard to find homes where they want to live that are affordable and meet their needs.

Our priority is to ensure that there are enough good-quality and genuinely affordable homes for everyone. This includes building new homes, improving existing housing, and creating diverse neighbourhoods where people want to live.

We will make this happen by:

- Delivering 36,000 new homes in Manchester between 2022 and 2032, including at least 10,000 affordable homes, to meet the needs in every area of the city
- Ensuring Manchester's rented homes are safe and well maintained, especially in the private sector, with selective licensing in areas such as Harpurhey, Longsight, Crumpsall and Moss Side
- Reducing the carbon emissions associated with Manchester's housing and its new-build homes, helping meet Manchester's climate goals and making residents' bills cheaper
- Ending homelessness and rough sleeping by delivering Manchester's homelessness strategy, preventing people from becoming homeless, improving the offer of temporary accommodation, and supporting people to move on to a settled home
- Ensuring housing is genuinely affordable and accessible to all by delivering policies such as the Manchester Living Rent.



Council homes for social rent in Collyhurst under construction



# Priority 7: Make neighbourhoods attractive and well kept with good facilities, services and green spaces

A city's neighbourhoods greatly influence how residents feel about where they live. In Manchester, we know that some areas are not as well maintained as they could be, and that access to good public services and green spaces isn't equal across the city. But we have strengths to build on, with many residents already within a 15-minute walk of a park.

This priority is about ensuring all parts of Manchester are places residents feel proud to call home, with clean streets, high-quality public facilities, and plenty of green spaces. Our goal is to create welcoming environments – places we can be proud of that encourage wellbeing and community connections.

We will make this happen by:

- Investing in highstreets to make them more attractive and sustainable, such as the regeneration of Wythenshawe Civic Centre
- Investing in, improving and expanding our 150 public parks and green areas, ensuring every resident has access to nature
- Ensuring every neighbourhood has access to the public services they need, such as libraries, GP surgeries, community centres and youth centres
- Improving the cleanliness of Manchester's public spaces to make them pleasant and safe for everyone, and working with partners such as Keep Manchester Tidy to show we all have a role to play
- Ensuring every neighbourhood has access to nature by planting 2,000 new trees a year as part of the City of Trees initiative, expanding green corridors and walking routes, and improving access to waterways like the Irk Valley and Medlock River
- Using Manchester's Neighbourhood Investment Funds to invest in projects that will make a real difference to our neighbourhoods
- Continuing to invest in our 23 leisure centres and 25 libraries.

#### Plans for Wythenshawe Civic Centre



#### Our city

# Priority 8: Have a growing economy that provides jobs and equal opportunities for everyone

Manchester's economy has seen significant growth over the past decade, but not everyone has benefited equally from the opportunities created. Levels of poverty, including child poverty, are too high despite our economic growth. This priority focuses on ensuring that economic growth is inclusive, creating high-quality jobs and ways for all residents to thrive.

Our aim is to support a diverse, thriving and innovative economy that provides good employment prospects for everyone, whatever their background or skills.

- Promoting growth in Manchester's strongest sectors, such as life sciences, digital technology, advanced manufacturing and the creative economy, to generate jobs
- Working with the Business Growth Hub to help entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses Supporting work at Greater Manchester-level to improve the productivity of Manchester's businesses
- Ensuring Manchester residents are qualified for higher-skilled jobs in the city and have clear, easy-to-use support for getting work through partnerships with Manchester employers and training providers
- Increasing the number of employers
   paying the Real Living Wage, and working
   with the Greater Manchester Good
   Employment Charter to promote fair
   wages, secure contracts, and good
   working conditions across the city
- Promoting Manchester as a global business destination, and supporting businesses to have a positive impact in the city through Manchester's leading work on social value.

## Priority 9: Adapt to a changing climate and rapidly reduce carbon emissions

Climate change is one of the most urgent challenges facing Manchester, and its effects are already being felt around the world. Our city has set a science-based goal to become zero carbon by 2038, which is essential to meet the UK Government's 2050 target. But there's still much more to do.

This priority is about taking bold action to reduce carbon emissions and preparing Manchester to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The goal is to ensure a fair response and for everyone in the city to benefit from cleaner air, improved public spaces, a healthier environment, and warmer, cheaper-to-run-homes.

We will make this happen by:

- Taking everyone with us on our journey to net zero carbon, cutting bills and emissions
- Rapidly reducing carbon emissions to become zero carbon by 2038 by delivering Manchester's Climate Change Framework

   including retrofitting more homes and buildings, increasing use of renewable energy, and helping people to access electric vehicles
- Helping the city adapt to climate change effects, such as more frequent and extreme flooding and heat stress
- Helping people to choose walking, cycling and public transport instead of using private cars, where possible
- Facilitating the development of lowcarbon economic growth opportunities, for example by supporting new technologies
- Working through the Manchester Climate Change Partnership to support organisations in Manchester to reduce their direct carbon emissions associated with things like buildings and travel.





#### Priority 10: Have world-renowned things for everyone to see and do, showcasing our talent for sport and culture

Manchester is known around the globe for its rich cultural scene, vibrant sports heritage, and innovative arts. However, we want to ensure that everyone across the city can enjoy and take pride in these offerings, while also attracting visitors from around the world.

This priority is about enhancing and promoting Manchester's sport and cultural facilities, making sure that they are accessible to everyone, everywhere in the city. We want to create a city where culture and sport are parts of everyday life and continue to elevate Manchester's global reputation. By prioritising culture and sport, we aim to make Manchester a place where everyone can enjoy and participate in incredible experiences, strengthening our city's identity and international appeal.

- Supporting major spaces like Aviva Studios, HOME, Contact, Bridgewater Hall, Z-arts, National Football Museum and Manchester's elite sporting facilities, as well as venues throughout the city and our neighbourhoods to provide diverse, accessible and exciting programmes for all
- Bringing world-class sporting and cultural events to the city, from international sports championships to the Manchester International Festival, further developing our unique spirit and creativity
- Promoting community arts, culture, sports and physical activity, ensuring that neighbourhoods benefit from local initiatives and that they have access to sporting and cultural facilities and activities. This includes delivering Manchester's Cultural Strategy and continued investment in local arts projects, as well as sports and physical activity programmes
- Embracing Manchester's unique history of music, art, literature and industry, while also nurturing new and diverse talent in the creative and athletic sectors
- Delivering Manchester's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy to increase sport and other physical activities across the city.





# Priority 11: Have reliable transport that gets you where you want to go, quickly, cheaply, safely and cleanly

Getting around Manchester should be reliable, quick, affordable, safe, and environmentally friendly. However, we know that our current transport network doesn't always meet these needs, and that cost, congestion, and limited or disconnected options are challenges for many residents.

Our priority is to create a transport system that works for everyone, connecting people to jobs, schools and leisure activities efficiently and sustainably. It's also about connecting Manchester to other places – in the UK and further away. This means making public and active transport – like buses, trams, cycling and walking – the best and easiest choices for getting around.

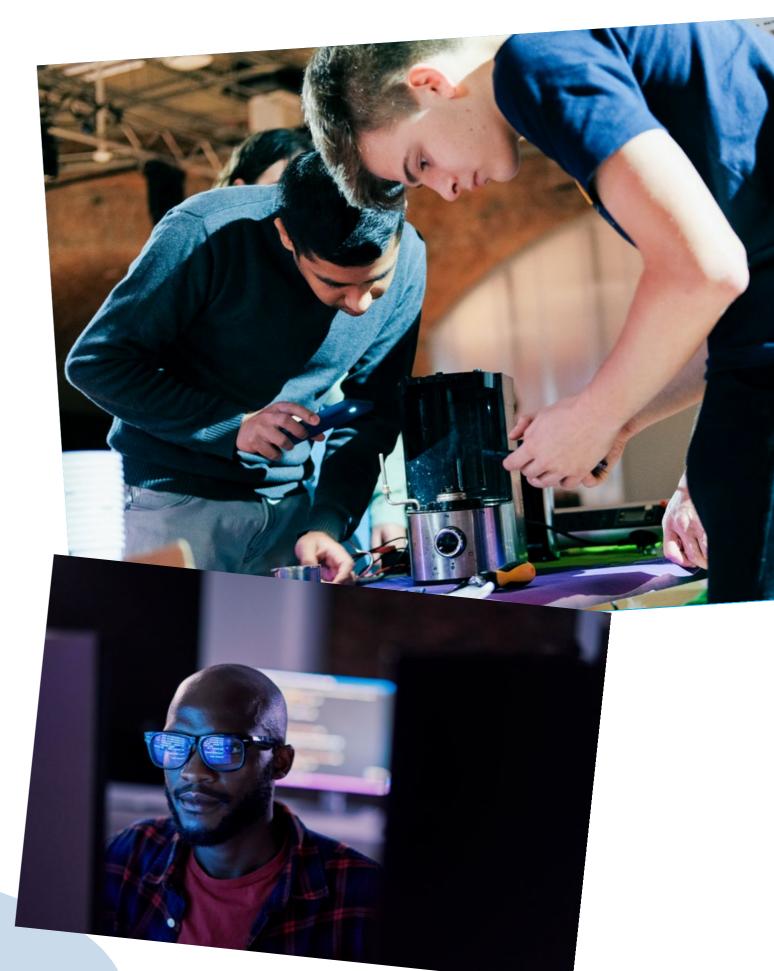
We must ensure every area of the city has good-quality, regular, reliable public transport. This means working closely with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to make sure the city's transport network works for everyone.

- Continuing to work with GMCA and TfGM to develop the Bee Network, a fully integrated, affordable and sustainable transport system for Greater Manchester that will bring buses, trams, trains and active travel together by 2030
- Delivering Manchester's Active Travel Strategy to expand cycling and walking routes. This will create safer, more accessible travel options and help more people to walk and cycle, reducing car reliance and promoting healthier travel
- Investing in cleaner, greener buses and extending tram and rail networks to reach more neighbourhoods, as well as making travel affordable and reliable
- Reducing emissions from commercial and private vehicles, including updating and replacing vehicles used by Manchester's public sector
- Working in partnership to improve Manchester's connections regionally, nationally and globally.

#### Priority 12: Embrace technology to achieve our aims, safely and ethically

Technology plays a huge role in making our lives easier and our city smarter, but it needs to be used thoughtfully and responsibly. This priority is about harnessing the power of technology to improve public services, make everyday life more convenient, and help achieve Manchester's ambitions. We recognise the impact of digital services on global carbon emissions and want to make sure that everyone benefits from digital advancements and that technology is used ethically, protecting people's privacy and safety.

- Making Council services easier to access, in ways that work for everyone
- Delivering Manchester's Digital Inclusion Strategy, making sure everyone has access to affordable data and digital tools, and that they can learn the skills needed to use them, reducing the digital divide across communities
- Delivering Manchester's Digital Strategy to make Manchester a world-class digital city by 2026
- Collaborating with Manchester's businesses and universities to foster innovation in areas such as artificial intelligence and green technology, boosting the local economy
- Ensuring that data is held securely, used transparently and made available to others to help tackle the city's biggest challenges
- Responding to the impacts of automation and displacement of jobs, and creating new roles and opportunities.



# Tracking our progress



Manchester people have helped to set some ambitious new priorities for our city, and we want to clearly show how they are being achieved. The Council and its partners will set out a more detailed plan of action for making these ambitious priorities happen.

We will regularly share statistics and figures to check if our work is having the right effects. We'll also use them to see if we are closing the gap between people who are doing well and those doing less well.

And whatever the numbers say, we want to understand how residents **feel** about the progress being made. We can only achieve these ambitious goals for our city if everyone pulls together to make the future Manchester one that we all want to see.

Finally, we'll publish results and other relevant figures in our yearly **State of the City Report**.

