

Manchester City Council: Is Manchester a world class city?

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Introduction

Manchester City Council frequently describe their city as belonging to a group of "world-class cities" but what does this entail and how can we measure

it? The World Council on City Data (WCCD) collects data from 48 cities on 100 indicators broadly covering the themes of sustainability and quality of life. This research project aimed to collect as many of these indicators as possible to assess how Manchester compares to other global cities.

Method

This project was largely focused on research, using contacts at the council and other public sector organisations to find a large range of data from the unemployment rate to the number of trees planted every year. The analysis undertaken was largely exploratory, producing a number of graphs demonstrating how Manchester's performance compared to that of other cities in the WCCD.

Key Findings

Unemployment Rate

Manchester's unemployment rate is fairly average, Greater Manchester's is 2% lower. Both are below the mean of all WCCD cities but maybe higher than you would expect from a world-class city. Manchester does have one of the highest proportions of people in full-time employment, which is of particular interest following the work of the Inclusive Growth Commission which identified insecure part-time work and zero hours contracts as contributors to the rise in in-work poverty.

Higher Education

The number of Manchester residents with higher education degrees is significantly below average (the value for GM is even lower at around 15,000), suggesting Manchester residents are not accessing the wide range of Higher Education services in and around Manchester.

Average life expectancy

Considering Manchester's poor life expectancy is interesting in light of a recent study by professors at the University of Manchester published about the north-south life expectancy divide. The study found that people living in the North are more likely to die before the age of 75 and since the 1990s, premature mortality has declined in the South but plateaued in the North. WCCD data supports the findings of this report as the average life expectancy in London is 5 years higher than that of Manchester.

Women in government

The area where Manchester really excels is equality and female representation. Manchester City Council has the highest number of elected female councillors and the second highest percentage of women employed in the city government workforce, only Helsinki is higher.

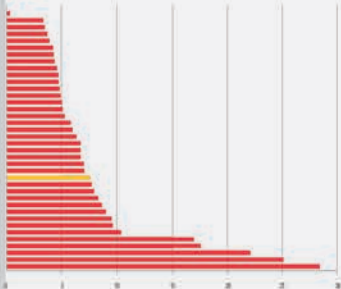


Figure 1 Unemployment Rate

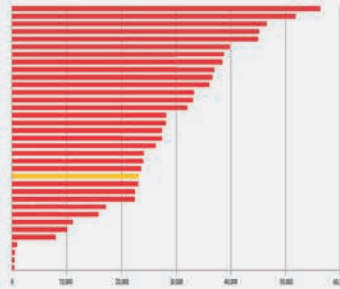


Figure 2 Number of Higher Education degrees per 100,000 population

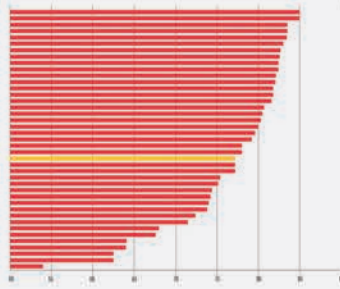


Figure 2 Average life expectancy

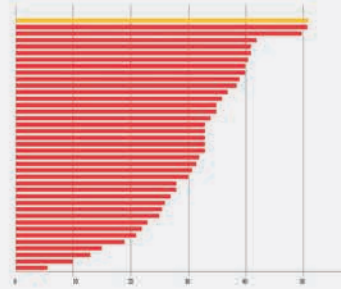


Figure 4 Women as a percentage of total elected to City government

Conclusion

The findings of this research project suggest that Manchester is performing well when compared to other global cities. The city has a vibrant economy, very low levels of pollution, and extremely high representation of women in government. This research also highlights some areas where Manchester

is under-performing, predominantly issues of health and crime. Overall my assessment was that joining the WCCD would be a worthwhile project for the Council to consider in the future.