

# Manchester City Council

## Organisational Assessment

Dated 9 December 2009



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for an independent overview  
of local public services

## Manchester City Council

### Overall, Manchester City Council performs well

Managing performance	3 out of 4
Use of resources	2 out of 4
Managing finances	2 out of 4
Governing the business	2 out of 4
Managing resources	2 out of 4

#### Description of scores:

1. An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements, Performs Poorly
2. An organisation that meets only minimum requirements, Performs Adequately
3. An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements, Performs Well
4. An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements, Performs Excellently

## Summary

Overall, Manchester City Council performs well - It continues to play a strong role to develop the City and the wider region. This includes helping to shape ambitious plans for Greater Manchester up to 2020 and helping to secure major transport investment.

There is a difference between the scores for use of resources and managing performance. We decided that the score should be that overall Manchester City Council performs well rather than adequately. This is because the Council is making good progress in many important areas. Its response to the recession is strong, school results are improving, and residents are gradually becoming healthier. The Council is doing a lot to improve services for older people and social care services provide good support for vulnerable adults. Also, the Council, with partners is having particular success to help reduce gun and gang-related crime.

Manchester City Council scores 3 out of 4 for managing its performance. The Council is addressing inequalities and poverty which is an increasingly important and well understood priority. It knows future economic growth will depend on how well poorer areas prosper as well as the wealthier ones. And that areas like school absence, residents' health, wages and skills, high crime and poor quality housing in some neighbourhoods will need continuing and often more attention.

Ofsted rates that the Council's children's services perform adequately. Most children and young people achieve as well as those living in similar areas, but not as well as national averages. School results have shown recent improvements - in the last few years GCSE results have improved faster than nationally. But across the City, school standards are inconsistent, and some groups of pupils do not achieve what they should. Behaviour in secondary

schools and levels of persistent absence remain key weaknesses.

With partners, the Council is making progress in improving the health of local people. In general, people are living longer, and the gap with the national average is closing faster than expected. Other measures show the health of those living in the poorest communities is improving. But big differences in people's health still exist across the City, and this remains a key challenge for the Council and its partners.

Manchester's mental health services in Manchester are not good enough. The Council needs to play an important role with partners to improve this - there is some progress and we shall look carefully in 2010 for clear signs of improvement.

The Care Quality Commission rates the Council's adult social care as performing well. There is strong corporate and political leadership in plans to transform adult social care services. More people who need care are being given the money to pay for it themselves. And services are helping more people to remain in their own homes and live independently.

The Council works well with the police and other partners to make Manchester safer. Overall crime has fallen in recent years, but levels of burglaries and violence remain concerns. Levels of crime in the City centre and to the North of the City are particularly high. We shall look carefully next year on whether action is achieving results.

The Council scores 2 out of 4 for use of resources. It plans its finances well. This enables it to spend in line with its priorities while keeping a fairly low Council Tax. It has saved more than £20m through a clear focus on efficiency. It is developing its understanding of costs and performance, and has a greater focus on value for money.

## About Manchester City Council

Manchester is the UK's fastest growing city economically, with levels of investment second only to London, transforming it into the regional powerhouse of economic growth. Its population is rising faster than the national average - reaching 464,000 in 2008 and it should reach 501,000 by 2015.

As the city's population increases, its profile is changing. The working age population is increasing, while the proportion of children and older people is declining. The population is also becoming increasingly diverse - nearly 30% of the population are from ethnic groups other than white British. Manchester suffers from significant levels of poverty although it is improving.

Manchester City Council has 96 elected councillors each representing an area of the city. Most councillors are Labour, and the Labour Party are in charge of the Council. The local strategic partnership, the Manchester Partnership, works to improve the quality of life for residents. It includes the Council and other public and voluntary bodies.

The Council has said the following areas are important for the next 2 years.

Promoting economic growth

Reaching full potential in education and employment

Promoting individual and collective self-esteem/mutual respect

Creating Neighbourhoods of Choice

Improving Council and community leadership

Delivering the Manchester Improvement Programme

Continuously improving the value for money of services

Developing the workforce to deliver high-quality services

Ensuring customer and neighbourhood focus

Managing our performance and risk to ensure we deliver our objectives

## Organisational assessment

### Promoting economic development

Over the years, the increase in number of people working in the City reflects what a thriving place Manchester has become. 8% more people worked in the City in 2007 compared with 2000. The City's business base is also thriving - increasing nearly 5% in less than ten years.

The Council has played an effective role in attracting businesses and employees to the City, through its regional and national links. Not all local people, though, have benefited from this increased prosperity. This is one of the key messages in an independent review of the local economy sought by the Council and others. Ensuring everyone benefits from the City's success is at the heart of partners' ambitions for Manchester.

The Council has responded quickly and effectively to the challenges presented by the recession. With its partners, it has not lost sight of what it wants to achieve in the long-term. It has led the way in providing advice and support to businesses and residents alike. Work with local organisations such as Co-operative Insurance Services and in its 'Helping Hands' initiative. It is also trying to keep momentum in the economic growth of Manchester City centre.

The Council continues to take a leading role in improving transport into Manchester and across the City. More people are travelling into the City by public transport, walking or cycling, Car journeys are down by 18%, and cycle trips have more than doubled. This is a good achievement against a background of increased car ownership. Satisfaction with local transport information and bus services is higher than the national average. Recently, the Council took a strong lead in securing agreement across all Greater Manchester councils for a £1.5 billion programme to improve regional

transport.

The Council is working hard to improve its own use of natural resources, and can show some positive results. It originally planned to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by 1% each year, but has nearly achieved a 2% annual fall. It is playing an important role across all Greater Manchester councils in their work on climate change. Targets to reduce Manchester's carbon dioxide levels have been achieved. The Council recognises that it needs to do more with partners to help make further reductions. Future prospects are strengthened through the Council's 'Climate Change: Call for Action' - which is involving businesses and the public in tackling climate change. We shall look next year at whether action is starting to achieve results.

## Reaching full potential through education, skills and employment

The Council, with partners is making some progress to improve opportunities for residents to access higher paid jobs. A 'Residents Wages' project in 3 parts of the City seeks to help bridge this gap - improvement will not show overnight. The Council is working well with partners to reduce the number of people on out-of-work benefits, but the number of long-term claimants remains high - the Residents Wages project is looking for ways to reduce this. The recession is making the task of reducing the jobless figures more difficult; those living in areas of the City such as the North are more likely to be out of work.

Secondary schools are not doing enough to promote economic well-being - according to external inspections. This is a key weakness and can affect the ability of young people to get employment, training or education. There are slightly more young people who do not secure this route compared to other areas and significantly more than nationally. The Council is taking action to improve this key aspect.

Many young people find it difficult to secure jobs or work based training. Vulnerable groups are most at risk - with those leaving Council care and young offenders finding it especially hard to find suitable opportunities. The Council, Job Centre Plus and other public bodies know that young people need to have the right skills so they can get work. This is even more important now, given the impact the recession is having on job opportunities for young people. Also, child care services are mixed. Good levels of lower income families use formal childcare - suggesting they have been able to get jobs - but there are weaknesses in the quality of the services available.

The quality of Manchester's schools is mixed - meaning there are some weaknesses in the quality of services for children. Not enough of the provision is good. It is much better in nursery schools and primary schools are satisfactory. However, the quality of secondary schools is inconsistent - despite some exceptions, too many schools are just satisfactory. This restricts parents' choices when seeking to choose good schools for their children.

Very young children and those at Manchester's primary schools achieve as well as those who live in similar areas. But by the age of 16 standards fall below those across the country - but close to the standards achieved in similar areas. This means that most young people achieve as well as those living in

similar parts of the country, but not as well as national averages. School results have shown some recent improvements, including for those children and young people who are in the care of the Council, and for those from minority ethnic groups. Over the last few years, GCSE results have improved faster than nationally. The capacity to improve further is being strengthened by the opening of 4 new Academies, with 3 due in 2010.

Weaknesses remain in the standards of behaviour in secondary schools and levels of persistent absence. Absence from secondary schools has been too high for too long and action to improve it is not working. This again affects parents' choice at secondary level and the absence rate has an obvious effect on attainment. In addition, schools take longer to come out of special measures than in similar areas or nationally. This indicates that some children are attending inadequate schools and they are not improving quickly enough. We shall look next year to see whether there is any improvement here.

There is too much inconsistency between schools in the standards achieved. There is still a big gap between the areas of the City where results are poorest (such as Miles Platting and Newton Heath) and the best performing areas. There are some groups of children and young people who are not achieving what they should - Black Caribbean primary pupils are not doing well enough, and White working-class boys are achieving below the City average.

Too many young people are leaving school without any qualifications at all - in some parts of the City, more than 1 in 7 and this is rising. The issue remains a concern for the Council as this hampers young people's ability to get on in life.

The Council is contributing well to improving the health of local people. It is helping to encourage more people to give up smoking and reduce deaths from heart disease, stroke and cancer. The Council recognises the scale of the task to address big differences in people's health across the City - they are working well with partners to better prevent ill-health as well as treating the effects of it. But it needs to do more to influence the high levels of teenage girls who become pregnant. The number increased by nearly 16% from 1998 to 2007. Council and health service efforts to tackle this are not yet proving effective; the latest local data suggests that the rate has remained unchanged into 2009.

Healthy lifestyles are supported and promoted in most schools and settings. More young people have school lunches than in the country as a whole and obesity levels in primary schools are broadly average. There are some weaknesses. This includes in childcare where the provision for healthy lifestyles is only satisfactory and the private fostering service where it is inadequate. So, for some young people this is not good enough.

Manchester's mental health services need improving. The quality and availability of mental health services have not been good enough for several years. The Council, with partners are now addressing this, but it will take time to see whether this leads to sustained improvement. Some areas perform better than others, for example, services for young people who may have mental health problems. This is important as without proper support these are young people who are very vulnerable. We shall look next year at whether recent action to improve mental health services is achieving results.

Inspections show that children and young people are in safe environments whether in nursery provision, schools or children's homes. The exceptions are in childminding, non-domestic childcare and in some aspects of the fostering service. It is crucial that all children should be safe and that safeguarding is afforded proper importance. This indicates that services can improve in some important areas. There have been 7 serious case reviews in the last year - of which 2 were inadequate. This shows that Manchester must continue to learn when serious safeguarding issues arise.

Overall Manchester's performance on children's safeguarding is in line with other similar areas and national comparisons. Fewer children experience bullying and there is good performance on the number of young people on child protection plans for more than 2 years - but it did increase slightly this year. This indicates that intervention with families in need of support is effective. Despite recent progress the completion of initial assessments within timescales remains an area for improvement. This could mean too long a delay in ensuring that children receive support or intervention. There are similar delays when reviewing the needs of looked after children and too many young people did not get their reviews on time.

## Promoting individual and collective self-esteem/mutual respect

The Council has made some progress in helping people to feel good about their lives and neighbourhoods. More Manchester residents are happy with their lives than last year; and minority ethnic communities are on the whole as satisfied with their local area as others. But fewer people feel they belong to their local neighbourhood, and influence the decisions that affect their lives, than elsewhere in Greater Manchester.

The Council shows a good awareness of the needs of its different communities, and works well with other public bodies to bring about a better community spirit. This is a top priority for the Council. For the first time this year, it has produced a 'Communities of Interest' report that reflects on the disadvantages suffered by some residents. The Council and its partners aim to use this to help ensure local services better meet people's needs. Although it uses many ways to involve local people in decision-making, the Council wants to do more to bring people closer together in their neighbourhoods.

The Council demonstrates strong corporate and political leadership in its plans to transform adult social care services. It engages well with staff and people who use services, which is helping inform the transformation. It continues to provide opportunities for carers and service users to influence service development. This includes those from minority ethnic communities. It has also done well in giving people greater choice about the services they need.

More people who need care are being given the money to pay for it themselves. Over the last year, the take-up of these payments has increased. This fits with the priority of the Council and partners to develop more services that better meet people's needs. The Council knows that it needs to identify how people's quality of life is improved as a result of these types of payment. This will then help it develop future services.

Local services are helping more people to live at home - including those who are older and disabled, people with mental health illness, and those with disabilities. The City has a lower level of adults being admitted to residential or nursing care than similar places. The Council's Adult Social Care Services have successfully introduced a service called 'reablement'; this is helping people to remain in their own homes and live independently.

The Council's Valuing Older People (VOP) strategy has proved effective over a number of years. It has focused on those improving aspects of life that older people say are important to them. This includes crime and safety, benefits, housing and neighbourhoods, sport, cultural activities and lifelong learning. There are ambitious plans to further improve older people's quality of life. This is reflected in the strategy 'A Great Place to Grow Older'.

## Creating Neighbourhoods of Choice

The Council works well with Greater Manchester Police and local people to help communities feel safer. But the scale of the task is significant. Levels of crime continue to be higher in Manchester than in similar places. Overall crime has fallen in recent years, but levels of burglaries and violence remain concerns. Crimes linked to race or religion have also increased.

High crime in the City centre and to the North of the City is a particular challenge. Rates of burglary are too high - up in last 12 months. Also, high crime among the large student population is a concern - this requires a long-term focus although recent falls are encouraging. Many students live in poor-quality rented accommodation with inadequate security. We shall look next year at whether crime levels are improving in North Manchester and for specific community groups like students.

Compared with similar places, more young people are involved in crime, but these numbers are falling - by nearly 12% over the last year. The number of young people committing their first offence has also been reducing steadily over the last few years - by 25% since 2006. Manchester's Youth Offending Service performs less well than similar areas. A 2009 inspection of Youth Offending found the Youth Offending Service could do more to reduce the risk that young offenders in its care have on local communities. If the recommendations in the inspection report are followed prospects for the future should be good.

Significantly more Manchester residents than the national average think that anti-social behaviour, drink and drugs are still big problems in their neighbourhoods. But residents are more confident in the action taken by the police and Council to tackle local crime.

Will Manchester reduce crime levels significantly? Long-term falls in crime rely on much more than intensive police and other activity. The Council recognises this and continues to lead extensive regeneration of run-down areas and offering support for families who struggle to cope. The Council with partners are transforming many areas, such as Beswick in East Manchester. But, much remains to be done. Poor quality housing, high rates of absenteeism for school, and high unemployment all add to the scale of the challenge. The Council needs to continue to work closely with partners to co-ordinate its efforts to improve community safety and check progress.

A real success is the drop in gun crime and gang violence in Manchester. The Council, police and other partners have made an excellent impact here. They have disrupted the supply of guns, and have kept safe those most at risk from gang activity. Communities have been helped to work with the police and turn against gang members. Other areas can learn from Manchester's approach. Although gun crime has fallen dramatically, it has not stopped and, regrettably, further injuries and even deaths must be expected.

The Council is performing inconsistently in improving the environment. It has to do better and it recognises this. Fewer residents than the national average are happy with doorstep recycling. Less household waste was recycled or composted in 2008/09 than the previous year - this was a surprise and means Manchester recycles significantly less than similar places. Following a major public consultation, the Council is making a big investment in new waste and recycling facilities; this is due to be in place by the end of 2009. We shall look carefully at this in 2010 to see if recycling performance is improving.

The Council works well with local communities to improve the appearance of local neighbourhoods and it is having some success. Its 'Challenge Manchester: 100 Days' campaign led to over 16,000 people volunteering or attending over 280 local events - and 40 tonnes of waste were removed. The amount of fly-tipping is down, but remains a problem. Also, amounts of graffiti and litter have been increasing in some parts of the City. So, more remains to be done to improve cleanliness of streets and open spaces.

The Council remains committed to improving Manchester's appearance - it has appeared 3 times in the final of Britain in Bloom. Greener spaces have been promoted through planting 2,500 trees. And judges have named 30 of Manchester's parks and green spaces among the best in England and Wales. It has also pledged to plant fruit trees in all of its 135 parks. Despite this, fewer people than average are happy with the quality of Manchester's local parks and open spaces.

The Council has a good understanding of the condition of both private and public sector housing in the City and of the extent of housing need. The growth of Manchester's population has led to a significant rise in new properties. This is helping to transform run-down estates like the housing market renewal area. But much of the housing growth is City centre apartments and there remains a shortage of larger affordable properties.

Continuing challenges include addressing the high rate of empty properties and low levels of people who own their home. Plans to improve it are not having enough impact. The Council and partners are unlikely to meet their targets to increase owner occupation.

Despite progress some residents still live in poor quality housing. 3,000 homes will not achieve national standards for 'decent homes' for a few more years - missing original targets. The Council currently manages these homes and its performance in doing so has been weak. Poor re-letting of homes, repairs and gas servicing and rent collection coupled with doubt about when improvements would begin have all contributed to poor resident satisfaction. The Council has responded by rearranging some services, improving gas performance and improving monitoring arrangements - performance and resident satisfaction is improving as a result. We shall look next year at progress in this area.

The Council provides generally good services to vulnerable groups. Homelessness services are improving - but more needs to be done to address the over representation of black and minority ethnic backgrounds in levels of homelessness admissions. Continuing focus in this area will be needed. Also, waiting lists for major adaptations to help a person's disability are lengthy, taking an average of 158 days to complete. However, waiting times are consistent with, and sometimes significantly less than, other large cities. And the average waiting times is in fact reducing.

## Improving Council and community leadership

The Council continues to play a leading role to develop the City and the wider region. This has led to the recent announcement that Greater Manchester is to become a City Region. This will see Greater Manchester's councils joining forces to develop the local economy, transport, skills, employment and housing. The new Greater Manchester Strategy to 2020 brings together these priorities, and builds on an ambitious and innovative independent review of Manchester's economy.

Manchester City Council is displaying local leadership through its role in the City Region Pilot. Manchester aims to deliver economic growth through public service reform. It is doing this by focusing on improving the City's productivity by working through difficult decisions to improve co-ordination at all levels of government. Key issues addressed through the pilots are long-term economic growth and improving citizens' life chances - including children's services, skills, young people, housing, science and research. We will watch this carefully to see the outcomes locally and its influence nationally. Of particular interest is whether it helps to create a more responsive and co-ordinated approach across all levels of government.

Within the Council, the role and remit of the Audit Committee are now more clearly defined and focused on the key issues. More widely, councillors are keen to ensure they have more influence over the Council's performance. Improvements needed include better quality, more timely information to help make better decisions, and developing Councillors' skills. The running of the Council's key partnerships with other organisations is being improved - examples include new arrangements for the Children's Board, and plans to strengthen the way partnerships agree and check its priorities, plans and decisions.

The way the Council plans its finances is good. This enables it to spend in line with its priorities while keeping a fairly low Council Tax. Business planning has been improved, with staff at all levels now more involved. Staff are also more aware now of how to manage business risks following the training they have received.

## Delivering the Manchester Improvement Programme

The Council has saved more than £20m through its Manchester Improvement Programme (MIP), in which it has invested much effort. This programme is designed to create efficiency, reduce waste, and to improve staff skills - with

the ultimate aim of improving the resident experience of dealing with the Council. A good example of this has been the overhaul of Education Services and the work they do with schools. It is using this experience to lead work across the other Greater Manchester councils looking for more efficient ways of working.

So it can further improve the efficiency of services, the Council has put in place an organisation-wide review. This is seen as a key element of improving efficiency in the current challenging economic climate. The Council is aiming to ensure that responsibility for improvement and efficiency is spread effectively across the organisation. To achieve this, the review will be part of services' business plans for 2010/11.

## Continuously improving the value for money of our services

Procurement is an area of strength for the Council. This has generated savings for the Council of £27m over the last two years against an original target of £25m. This expertise is recognised regionally and the Council is helping other councils improve their procurement. It is also leading the development of procurement arrangements regionally at the request of the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.

The Council is developing its understanding of costs and performance. There is a greater focus on value for money. It has introduced several initiatives to improve efficiency. It has developed better management information, and business plans for 2009/10 show how this is being used. Services are more aware of costs and are putting in place better arrangements for managing performance.

The Council and its partners know that the way they assess and meet service users' needs ('commissioning') has to change. As a result, the Council is introducing the 'Manchester Model' - this will include more support for commissioning in its key partnerships and business planning. It is early days for this approach; its success will be judged on whether it is able to deliver better outcomes for local people.

The Council has a clear plan for the management of its buildings over the next three years and beyond. It makes careful decisions about buying and selling property. It is continuing to spend on building maintenance where it is most needed. It questions whether its buildings provide value for money. A recent example of this is the Council's decision to radically improve the facilities provided in the Town Hall Complex. And it is doing more to understand how its buildings in local neighbourhoods can best benefit local communities.

## Developing our workforce to deliver high-quality services

The Council works well to manage and support its staff. This has been recognised by an independent review - helping it to keep its Investors in People award. The top 300 managers now take part in a more complete appraisal process, which involves feedback from their own staff. Weaknesses

remain though, especially high levels of staff sickness. Levels of sickness absence continue to rise - it went up to nearly 12.5 days per employee in 2009. In 2008, it was under 12 days, and under 11 days in 2006.

Senior managers are keen to improve the skills of the Council's workforce, especially those whose qualification levels are low. The Council has made good progress in enrolling front-line staff on courses to improve their skills. When recruiting new staff, it is aiming to attract particular groups of people, including the long-term unemployed.

The Council is developing a better understanding of what staff and skills it will need in the future. All Council services look at their staffing and skill levels as part of its business planning process. This information is then brought together to help the Council plan for the future. There is more to do, though, to bring all elements of service planning together.

The Council is looking to make further improvements to its way it manages its staff, including the way that managers keep in touch with their staff. It has set up its 'M Factor' programme to find staff with potential for development; this builds on its existing programme to develop senior managers.

## Customer and neighbourhood focus

The Council has had success in improving its focus on the needs of different communities. Extensive public money and joint working is helping to transform previously run-down areas. One good example is Beswick in East Manchester; much remains to be done, but there are signs of success. Residents are happier about living in the area and are more likely to stay; replacing poor quality houses is helping to transform estates and school results are improving. Much of the success is down to strong Council leadership and a greater focus on tackling poor areas mainly through the Council's Strategic Regeneration Frameworks. These set out how partners want to work with local people to transform the poorest areas of Manchester.

The Council consults well with local people to involve them in planning services that will tackle the issues of greatest concern; this is a particular challenge in a City as large and diverse as Manchester. It can show that such involvement is helping to shape services, including housing for those most in need.

The Council is strengthening its work locally. More support is being given to those Council staff who co-ordinate local people's involvement. The Council is developing a new approach aiming to get local services to work better together and meet local needs more effectively.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

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