

welcome to manchester



Whether this is your first visit or you are a returning friend, I am sure you will be able to see immediately the ongoing physical transformation which has taken place in the city over recent years.

Through strong vision and continuing investment the city has witnessed a major economic and cultural renaissance over the past two decades. This investment has seen significant improvements in the city's housing stock and the development of truly world-class office facilities. In addition, new cultural centres and revived open spaces – characterised by modern urban design – have changed the face and feel of Manchester, establishing the city as a major European economic and cultural hub. Indeed, our achievements in regeneration and the successful hosting of the Commonwealth Games have helped to further raise the profile of the city on an international scale.

Those who take a closer look beyond the new developments will see the more important changes: the strong sense of vision which drives the Council and its partners towards a better future for Manchester; the significant levels of investment that are coming into the city and reinforcing Manchester's role as the economic driver of the region; the involvement and engagement of Manchester people in their community and city, from local residents to private businesses, public sector organisations and voluntary groups; and

the boom in creativity and entrepreneurialism, bringing us back once again to the culture of innovation on which Manchester was founded (see page 48).

These changes are by no means complete. Manchester is on an exciting journey and there is still a long way to go. We must not be complacent about our achievements, but realistic about our challenges and focused in our vision for the future.

One such challenge is climate change – both for business and society. We see this as a major area for civil and business leadership and we are working with our businesses and residents to transform Manchester into the UK's greenest city (see page 94).

Overall, our vision is of a city where all individuals can reach their full potential through education and employment. A city of neighbourhoods where local residents choose to live. A city where people have ambition, self-esteem, and respect for themselves and their neighbours.

We encourage you to share in this vision and to join us, if only for the length of your stay, as honorary Mancunians.

Sir Richard Leese
Leader of Manchester City Council