



## SHARED VALUES FOR THE CITY REGION

“What Manchester does today, the world does tomorrow”  
– Disraeli

Photography courtesy of CityCo

It's fair to say that from coding computers to splitting atoms and spinning jennies, the metropolis of modernity that is Greater Manchester and its surrounding region shaped much of the world we know today.

**74%** place greater importance on compassionate values than selfish values



**77%** of people believe that their fellow citizens hold selfish values to be more important, and compassionate values less important, than is actually the case

## A CITY OF VALUES

Greater Manchester exported much more than technology and a knack for making a profit. The values of the people of Greater Manchester have been one of our great gifts to the world. Fairness, social justice, resilience, creativity; there is a thread of values and characteristics that could be marked out as Mancunian.

**Now it is time to once again rediscover and celebrate the values that are shared by people across the region.**

As we seek to build a more resilient city, heal the social divisions highlighted by the EU referendum, and foster constructive political debate in the lead-up to Mayoral elections, it is crucial to uncover the shared values that will make Greater Manchester an even more special place to live, work, visit, and study.

We believe that by working at the scale of a city region we can prove the case that there is a genuine under-appreciation of our compassionate values, and that by fostering and nurturing those values we can provide a model for other cities and regions in increasing their level of cohesion, resilience and mental well-being.

## THIS IS IN OUR DNA

Nearly 200 years ago, in St. Peter's Field in central Manchester, more than 60,000 people held banners – Reform, Universal Suffrage, Equal Representation and, movingly, Love.

These were values and aspirations that spread far beyond Manchester, as a legacy to the tragic events of that day. These values influenced the extension of the right to vote, the rise of the Chartist Movement from which grew the trade unions, and the creation of the Manchester Guardian newspaper.

These same values infused the 'Rochdale Principles' of co-operative membership, now reflected in the values that underpin the modern co-operative movement across the world: honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

## IT'S GOOD TO SHARE

Research conducted in collaboration with some of the world's leading authorities on values and how these are shaped, and published by Common Cause Foundation in 2016, points to the way in which our shared values can once again shape our city and region.

This research found that three-quarters of us living in north west England still prioritise 'compassionate' values – broadmindedness, honesty and social justice – over 'selfish' values. This is true regardless of age, gender, perceived wealth, or political orientation. And this really is the case: researchers can rule out the possibility that we are simply reluctant to own up to holding selfish values.

But when asked what values we believe that typical fellow citizens hold to be important, most of us overestimate the importance that others place on selfish values and underestimate the importance that they place on compassionate values.

**This misconception is holding us back from strengthening and celebrating the values that bring us together, rather than those that set us apart.**

Research has established that the more we overestimate the significance that others attach to selfish values, the less likely we ourselves are to have voted in recent elections, the lower our intentions to volunteer or support the work of a charity, and the more socially isolated we are prone to feel.

This disconnect, this misperception, is having a direct impact today on levels of civic engagement and collective responsibility. It is stopping us from being stronger together, as a city region, and the good news is that we can do something about it.

## RECONNECTING PEOPLE

This situation can be reversed, and a new initiative, launching in collaboration with Manchester Museum, will begin this process.

The Museum, which attracts some 450,000 visitors a year, is embarking on a programme of work to convey a deeper appreciation of the values that most people in Greater Manchester share, in line with its commitment to become 'a museum for life'.

The Museum will be directly communicating about the misperception that most people hold about what matters to others; it will also be working to change visitors' experience, to engage and champion these values – through, for example, the museum's interpretation of its collection, the interaction that visitors have with staff and volunteers, and both online and offline communications.

We will then build on this initiative in two ways:

1. We will support a diverse range of other organisations across the Greater Manchester region to engage stakeholders in similar ways. These organizations will work to build appreciation – among visitors, customers, employees, pupils, students, viewers, listeners or readers – of the values that most people living in the city region hold to be most important. And they will strive to model these values in the way that they engage with their stakeholders.
2. As this process unfolds, we will exploit a wide range of communication channels to convey the simple understanding that most citizens living in Greater Manchester place greater importance on compassionate values than is currently recognized.

This twin-track approach will embolden people to express compassionate values, rooting these in people's conscience as a crucial component of the identity of those living in Greater Manchester. This, in turn, will further strengthen people's appreciation of the widespread importance of these values, emboldening organisations to champion them, strengthening citizens' commitment to civic engagement, deepening community cohesion, and promoting well-being.

## LET'S BUILD A MOVEMENT

**The pressing need for such an initiative is clear. It is an initiative whose moment has come. We are looking for your help in building it.**

- We want people with leadership roles in organisations in Greater Manchester – businesses, public bodies, third sector organisations – to work with their existing networks to promote this agenda. We can offer tools, activities, messaging, metrics and practical bespoke help.
- We want to build a network to provide these leaders with support to express compassionate values through the work of their organisations, and to communicate an understanding of the values of typical citizens in Greater Manchester to their stakeholders – customers, employees, pupils, students, viewers, listeners, readers.
- We want people who have access to mass communication channels to work with us to communicate these insights across the Greater Manchester region. We need organisations to give over advertising space – online and offline. For those with extensive customer or staff networks, we can help you to use your communication channels. We need regional media to provide editorial coverage. And we need a sustained commitment to helping in this way.

## PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR HEART IS

And, of course, we need organisations across Greater Manchester to put some human and financial resources into this project to build shared values. This could be by agreeing to finance a major internal programme, such as the work we've launched with Manchester Museum, or it could be by supporting the small secretariat that will make this happen.

And what does success look like? We believe that by investing in this project, organisations across Greater Manchester will deliver:

- Increased civic engagement and social cohesion;
- A reduction in disaffection and the anti-social behaviour that accompanies it;
- Greater community cohesion, resilience and resourcefulness; and
- A boost to morale and mental wellbeing amongst internal networks (for example, the staff of participating organisations).

## WHAT MANCHESTER DOES TODAY...

We live in exceptional and turbulent times. Regardless of your political stance, there is a clear need across our small blue planet to heal divisions, remind ourselves of what we have in common, and underline prosperity and progress with values like tolerance, justice and openness.

**Perhaps it has never been as important as it is now for the people of Greater Manchester to rediscover and celebrate their shared values, and to take what they learn from this process to city-regions elsewhere.**

As the broadcaster, entrepreneur and polymath Tony Wilson once said, "this is Manchester, we do things differently here." It's time for a new Manchester model to be shared with the world.

## APPENDIX – KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

In February 2015, Common Cause Foundation asked Ipsos MORI to survey a thousand UK citizens, using a survey that we developed with the help of internationally leading social psychologists.

We found:

- Nationally, 74% of respondents place greater importance on compassionate values than selfish values. We find this to be the case irrespective of age, gender, region, or political persuasion. We can be confident that this result doesn't arise from respondents seeking to cast themselves in a better light by downplaying the importance they attach to selfish values. We tested for such bias.
- Nationally, 77% of respondents believe that their fellow citizens hold selfish values to be more important, and compassionate values to be less important, than is actually the case.
- People who hold this inaccurate belief about other people's values feel significantly less positive about getting involved – joining meetings, voting, volunteering. These people also report greater social alienation. They report feeling less responsible for their communities, and they are less likely to feel that they fit in with wider society – relative to citizens who hold more accurate perceptions of a typical British person's values.
- People believe that many kinds of institutions discourage compassionate values, and encourage selfish values, relative to the importance that people attach to these values themselves. For example, people believe that schools and universities encourage values of wealth, image and ambition more than people themselves hold these values to be important.

Full results are available here: [www.valuesandframes.org/survey](http://www.valuesandframes.org/survey)

Across the UK (across English regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), we found that these broad results held: people place greater importance on compassionate values than selfish values; and believe that their fellow citizens hold selfish values to be more important, and compassionate values to be less important, than is actually the case.

The results also hold irrespective of age, gender and political orientation. Details of these results can be found in the full report.

These results hold in north west England, too. But the dataset for this region is small, and one key step in our work will be to replicate this survey, but with an exclusive focus on a large and demographically representative sample of people living in Greater Manchester.

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