

PRESS RELEASE: Could Manchester be Europe's answer to America's hippest city - Portland, Oregon? A new report thinks it could be.

Manchester has enjoyed solid economic success, there is now an opportunity for a 'new wave' to Manchester's future. A new report *A Civil Economy for Manchester*, prepared by the think-do tank the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) for Macc (Manchester's local voluntary and community sector support organisation) demonstrates how this new wave is about unleashing the power of citizens, social and voluntary group.

The people of Manchester are the city's greatest asset: to build success for all, the public, social and commercial sectors need to work better together and collaborate as 'one Manchester'. This will serve to develop the economy and social life of the city, and in turn, enhance the quality of life and the international standing of the city.

The unique report and first of its kind in the UK, draws on learning from across the world including Barcelona in Catalonia and Copenhagen in Denmark - areas to which Manchester is frequently compared. However, Portland, the capital of Oregon in the US North West is intriguingly cited. This inland port and the wider city region has seen decline and a stunning rise. Its 'whole place' approach means that the traditional powers of business and local government see neighbourhoods and civic life as equal important elements to economic and social success. The city continues to attract people from all over the US, including Boston and New York, as well as California through a thriving high-tech, green economy and a buzzy cultural life.

The report points to Manchester's historical and present economic successes, but highlights the 'drag effect' of long-standing inequalities in the prosperity and welfare of different communities. The comprehensive report finds that success requires a broadening out of what we think are inputs to a great place and economy. Activity in the community and voluntary and social enterprise sector is held us as equally important as a new tram or latest piece of inward investment.

Neil McInroy, CEO of CLES and joint author of the report says: *'the conditions are ripe for the next positive phase in Manchester's development. The city already has a strong and proven leadership and an irrepressible 'can do spirit', which is common to many across social, public and commercial*

life. There is confidence and a spirit of collaboration that creates a 'style of working' – a chutzpah. However, we need an economy for Manchester which looks after its people even more. Productivity comes in many forms but we must produce more fulfilled lives. This report is not about fluffy ideas, it has 15 practical and concrete recommendations which if adopted will put Manchester on a pathway to even greater success. It can be a city for all'.

Mike Wild, Chief Executive of Macc, who commissioned the works says: *'This report has ideas and practical recommendations which shows what we can do to make Manchester the most socially and economically inclusive (and hippest) city in the UK and Europe. Manchester has a history of pioneering: it's time for us to do that again. Manchester could lead the way in modelling a vibrant economy which recognises people, the environment and economic growth as equal factors. What a chance we have!'*

The full report and summaries are available at

<http://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/civileconomy>

Centre for Local Economic Strategies

CLES is the UK's leading independent charitable research and member organisation, with a focus on economic development, regeneration and place-making. CLES works with a "think and do" approach, promoting action and implementing new progressive economic activities which create positive environmental, health and social outcomes. In all CLES' work the relationship between place, economy and people is central.

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Macc

Macc is Manchester's local voluntary and community sector support organisation. Its purpose is to encourage, support and develop voluntary and community groups and individuals to have a real influence over the places and communities in which they live. Macc provides capacity building, policy and influence support to local voluntary and community groups and assists people to find volunteering opportunities through Volunteer Centre Manchester.

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