Greater Manchester Universities polling – headline findings

May 2021
Methodology
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- 1013 respondents polled, adults of all ages
- At least 100 respondents in each of the ten boroughs
- Fieldwork 10th-22nd February 2021
- Data weighted by interlocking age & gender, and borough of residence, to representative proportions for Greater Manchester
- Additional data (not summarised here) asked about each of the Greater Manchester Universities individually, which has been provided to each client under separate cover
- Further analysis of the economic value respondents place on GM Universities to follow, also asked in this poll
- Public First is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by all its rules. For questions, please contact Head of Opinion Research Seb Wride at seb@publicfirst.co.uk
Topline findings
83% of respondents think GM Universities are important economically to the region

How important or unimportant do you think the following are to enhancing the city and region’s economy?

- Existing businesses: 52%
- Public transport: 53%
- Local schools: 55%
- Existing workforce: 50%
- Local house prices: 46%
- Natural environment: 47%
- Roads: 46%
- GM universities: 48%
- Local government: 43%
- Cultural attractions: 38%
- Local sports teams: 31%

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Neither important or unimportant
- Somewhat unimportant
- Very unimportant
- Don't know
79% of respondents think GM Universities contribute to making the region a good place to live

How important or unimportant do you think the following are to making Greater Manchester a good place to live?

- Local schools: 30% Very important, 57% Somewhat important, 3% Neither important or unimportant, 2% Somewhat unimportant, 1% Very unimportant
- Public transport: 31% Very important, 56% Somewhat important, 3% Neither important or unimportant, 2% Somewhat unimportant, 2% Very unimportant
- Natural environment: 32% Very important, 55% Somewhat important, 2% Neither important or unimportant, 3% Somewhat unimportant, 2% Very unimportant
- Existing businesses: 38% Very important, 48% Somewhat important, 1% Neither important or unimportant, 2% Somewhat unimportant, 1% Very unimportant
- Local house prices: 36% Very important, 50% Somewhat important, 1% Neither important or unimportant, 2% Somewhat unimportant, 1% Very unimportant
- Roads: 39% Very important, 46% Somewhat important, 1% Neither important or unimportant, 2% Somewhat unimportant, 1% Very unimportant
- Existing workforce: 42% Very important, 41% Somewhat important, 1% Neither important or unimportant, 2% Somewhat unimportant, 1% Very unimportant
- Cultural attractions: 39% Very important, 41% Somewhat important, 2% Neither important or unimportant, 2% Somewhat unimportant, 1% Very unimportant
- GM universities: 37% Very important, 38% Somewhat important, 2% Neither important or unimportant, 2% Somewhat unimportant, 1% Very unimportant
- Local government: 38% Very important, 41% Somewhat important, 2% Neither important or unimportant, 2% Somewhat unimportant, 1% Very unimportant

Legend:
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Neither important or unimportant
- Somewhat unimportant
- Very unimportant
- Don’t know
Without specific reference to the role of universities, economic recovery is clearly the top priority for GM residents – reducing inequalities and quality of life issues also score highly.

Which do you think are the most important long-term social and economic priorities facing Greater Manchester at this time? Please choose up to three.

- Economic recovery from lockdown: 47%
- Reducing unemployment: 32%
- Reducing inequalities e.g. poverty, homelessness, discrimination: 31%
- Improving health and fighting disease: 24%
- Increasing job quality and security: 24%
- Improving the environment e.g. clean air, green space, sustainable transport: 23%
- Attracting new major employers: 19%
- Improving public transport: 17%
- Improving educational outcomes for young people: 15%
- Encouraging start-ups and fast growing firms: 12%
- Boosting vocational/technical education for young people and adults: 11%
- Investing in green industries: 11%
- Ensuring access to culture: investing in museums, galleries, music and the arts: 6%
- Encouraging more students to stay in the city post graduation: 5%
- Don't know: 3%
- Other (Please Specify): 2%
71% of respondents say in aggregate that they are very proud or fairly proud of the role that the local universities play in the region.
....when broken down by borough, concepts of pride vary – from 79% in Manchester to 56% in Oldham
59% of respondents claim to have never visited any of the GM Universities

Thinking back to before the first lockdown due to Covid-19 - ie before March 2020 - when did you last visit any of the facilities of the following universities in Greater Manchester? (e.g. their campuses, buildings, sports facilities, or cultural facilities)

- Visited in 2019 or early 2020: 7%
- Visited in 2017 or 2018: 7%
- Visited in 2015 or 2016: 5%
- Visited before 2015, but not before 2010: 5%
- Visited sometime before 2010: 8%
- Don't know/ can't recall: 8%
- Not applicable - I have never visited: 59%
Of those who haven’t visited since 2017 (or indeed less than that), lack of knowledge and interest are the most commonly cited reasons

(For all those who haven’t visited since 2017) Which of the below are the main reason(s) why you did not visit any of the facilities of the universities in Greater Manchester more recently before the pandemic?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t know they were open to the public</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is nothing that the universities offer that is of interest to me</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have time to go</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think universities and their facilities are for people like me</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t travel easily to any of the university facilities</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please Specify)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it would be too expensive to use any of the university facilities</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Universities are thought of strongly – including on economy and culture – and residents want more students, not fewer. Opinions on their civic role, and direct benefits to residents, are more mixed.
When more specific benefits are probed – as priorities for the civic role – the practical takes precedence over the theoretical, with a bent to local (but not national) economic impact.

What benefits do you think local universities bring to Greater Manchester, if any? Please select ALL the options that best apply:

- Economic benefits to other parts of society: hotels, restaurants, taxis, buses, airports, bars etc.
- Providing public access to university-owned cultural venues
- Research carried out locally e.g. on health, environment, education, society and the economy
- Students volunteering in schools, communities and local government
- Students volunteering in schools, communities and local government
- Holding public events, performances and open days for local people
- Don’t know
- Taxes being paid to the national and local government by universities
- Not applicable - I don’t think anyone in...
Trafford is consistently the borough most likely to recognise the prompted practical benefits of GM Universities. Manchester (borough)’s pride – the highest in a previous question – seems more abstract than practical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Bolton</th>
<th>Bury</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>Oldham</th>
<th>Rochdale</th>
<th>Salford</th>
<th>Stockport</th>
<th>Tameside</th>
<th>Trafford</th>
<th>Wigan</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training future professionals to work locally in key areas e.g. as Teachers, Doctors, Nurses and Engineers</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating jobs and employing local people</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from other countries coming to study in Greater Manchester</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing access and opportunities for local people, from all backgrounds, to study at university</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research carried out locally e.g. on health, environment, education, society and the economy</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic benefits to other parts of society: hotels, restaurants, taxis, buses, airports, bars etc.</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing public access to university-owned cultural venues</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting key public services such as the NHS and schools</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forming partnerships with other organisations such as businesses, charities and schools</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holding public events, performances and open days for local people</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students volunteering in schools, communities and local charities</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes being paid to the national and local government by universities and students</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable - I don’t think anyone in particular benefits from my local university(ies)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please Specify)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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