Overview of the Data Fellowship

During my data fellowship at Manchester City Council, I worked on developing a Prosperity Index aimed at supporting Manchester's economic strategy. This index intends to provide a comprehensive view of economic and social well-being across the city's wards, helping policymakers track local progress and address socio-economic disparities. My role involved defining what prosperity means for Manchester, identifying key metrics, and developing a methodology for measuring and analysing prosperity at a granular level.

Data Analysis

I analysed a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, including economic indicators (income, employment), social metrics (health outcomes, crime rates), and environmental factors (air quality, green space access). Using GIS and Excel, I created a database of indicators, mapping them to Manchester's wards and ensuring the index was accurate, current, and relevant to the city's unique socio-economic landscape.

Findings

- Socio-Economic Disparities: The index revealed significant variations in prosperity across Manchester's wards, with disparities in income levels, employment rates, and access to essential services. Wards with lower prosperity scores often correlated with higher crime rates and lower educational attainment.

- Environmental Indicators: Air quality and green space access emerged as critical factors in determining overall well-being. Areas with greater environmental resources tended to score higher on the index, highlighting the importance of sustainable urban planning

- Health and Social Cohesion: Health outcomes and social factors, such as community engagement and crime rates, were strong predictors of ward-level prosperity. Wards with stronger community networks generally displayed higher levels of prosperity, underscoring the role of social cohesion in economic well-being.

- Guidance for Policy: The index serves as a tool for targeted interventions, providing city officials with a clearer picture of which wards require specific resources and support to bridge socio-economic gaps.

These findings underline the interconnected nature of economic, social, and environmental factors in shaping a community's prosperity and offer actionable insights for Manchester's economic strategy.

Key Skills Learnt

This fellowship enhanced my analytical and professional skills, especially in real-world data application for policy-making. I developed a nuanced understanding of socio-economic metrics, improved my data visualization capabilities, and gained valuable insights into the workings of local government. Engaging in council meetings and workshops, I saw firsthand how data influences decision-making, shaping my career ambitions towards economic strategy and policy analysis.

Figure 1: Snapshot of the prosperity index metrics selection