## Manchester Climate Assembly - Mandate Final Findings

The Manchester Climate Change Assembly recruited over 106 participants from across the city to take part in seven weeks of workshops. Here the five area groups identified the most relevant and appropriate actions for their neighbourhoods to take in order to make the largest impacts towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitions towards more sustainable living. Participants also worked together to create this mandate which represents actions the communities are unable to take and so require policy and infrastructure changes to be made by local council, business and national government. Our mandate has an international focus, not just Manchester in isolation, and changes need to be made from the very top down as well as from the grass roots, which includes emphasis on big corporations and businesses, not just individuals and communities. We are all being affected by the impacts of the climate emergency, and we can all do more in response.

Although it is recognised that the drastic changes needed may upset people and be politically unpopular, strong leadership and effective communication of the benefits of creating a more sustainable, connected and conscious society is crucial in bringing the population on board. Outreach activities like those of Envirolution (https://www.envirolution.org.uk) and the In Our Nature project (https://zerocarbonmanchester.commonplace.is) are vital in positively influencing public opinion. Further initiatives for education and awareness of both the benefits of sustainable transition options and of unsustainable practices, including school curriculums, is crucial for all of the following themes.


## Buildings and Energy

The retrofit of buildings is seen as a key priority in reducing emissions. The work of Red Cooperative and the Carbon Co-op is recognised as crucial in Manchester and potential economic models were explored with Charlie Baker from Red Co-op (https://red.coop). Climate pressures like heat stress could mean we rely more on options like air conditioning for our increasing energy use. A need to utilise retrofitting as well as nature based solutions (green roofs) needs to address this.

A main priority here is to retrofit every home as near to zero carbon as is practical. The creation of a strategy and monitored program to retrofit all buildings to radically reduce energy demand, reducing heat demand by 75% on average by 2038, is the kind of radical action needed in order to achieve this. A commitment to A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings for all buildings needs to be made. To begin, whole house retrofit proposals with costs AND benefits like bill savings need to be prepared so people are aware what is possible and where to start. Each building must be customised to that property, so that people get the retrofit they want not the one industry wants to give them. The creation of community advice hubs, which provide data on homes and adoption of retrofit measures will help raise awareness and provide information. The provision of green mortgages, with variable rates depending on energy performance, will help get people started. Information needs to be available on the environmental and social impacts of retrofit materials. Community forums could help drive ways forward in conjunction with carbon reduction targets.

The carbon footprint of building and operating new developments in planning decisions must be considered, with measures like automatic electricity saving measures as standard. No green field sites should be developed until all previously used (brown field or those that have not 're-greened') sites are used up. Development around rural or urban centres should be encouraged, at densities that enhance them and enable access without car use to make them more sustainable. The assumption of refurbishing, not demolishing buildings, when redevelopment is proposed should be the starting point in order to retain any embodied carbon.

For renters, landlord licensing should include measures for the improvement of energy performance and letting agents should publicise the total cost of occupation including bills not just rent. Property owners (landlords) should pay the excess for poor performance standards.

For delivery, it was recognised there was a huge gap in the amount of retrofitters needed and the current level of skilled workers. An attractive and positive green apprenticeship scheme should begin as soon as possible, with regional business models created. An industrial strategy should be developed, based on the need to mitigate the

climate crisis like the Lucas Plan (https://theecologist.org/2016/nov/02/lucas-plan-how-greens-and-trade-unionists-can-unite-common-cause) which highlights the importance of Trade Union engagement in this process.

New training centres or reprovision of existing training centres to deliver retrofit and energy skills fit for the future is key. Peripatetic or mobile construction teaching, wood and metalwork workshops in schools and colleges needs to be pushed, where Design and Technology can be used to introduce retrofit skills. Specialised training for new entrants into retrofit and energy needs to be provided and additional training for existing tradespeople and property maintenance operatives, so there are opportunities for public sector involvement to fill gaps (like direct labour organisations). The enforcement of long-term performance guarantees on work will also remove performance gaps.

Public and community owned ventures that fill in the gaps in provision, enabling changes to happen with any surpluses deployed where they are most needed, will help with the aim of developing ways of doing this that can enable the industry to grow faster, not just be a token gesture.

Energy production priorities include the creation of programs to enable all homes and business to be fitted with PV (solar) and energy storage. These can be community, publicly and/or privately owned. Decentralised and neighbourhood energy storage (e.g. batteries, pumped hydro, hydrogen) should be an infrastructure priority, as this will reduce the monopoly of the large energy companies and give more control to communities. Federating all the batteries will also generate more income to help pay the bills. Community ownership of wind turbines (on-shore or off-shore) which are in areas of sufficient wind resource should be encouraged. A larger public or community owned vehicle to bring all the small energy providers together to maximise benefits to all needs to be explored. Energy demand reduction plans across the region and sectors, with participation from the largest energy users including public sector and industry, needs to be created. In line with this push, all council buildings should only using low carbon fuels.

To pay for this transition, institutional investors need to be encouraged to re-invest in our future to capitalise a loan fund. Also, a socially or publicly owned revolving loan fund, with different loan products (e.g. equity and interest only loans) could be explored. Personal Retrofit Investment Funds (like building societies used to be) or local Green Bonds to capitalise loan funds could be other possibilities. Councils should also be encouraged to use their borrowing powers to capitalise a loan fund. The priority should be to develop different forms of lending based on the ability to pay (with fees instead of interest). The Ethex platform (https://www.ethex.org.uk) could be a good place to start exploring community share offers and the expansion of renewable energy capacity around Greater Manchester.

Ideally there should be zero VAT on all energy improvements and variable council tax and business rates if certifiably retrofitting building or homes. Affordable green housing needs to happen now, with councils pushing for legislation and funding strategies to be explored so all buildings and communities can begin the transition process.

**Fashion and Retail**

Alison Carlin and Camilla Cheung from Manchester Fashion Movement (https://manchesterfashionmovement.com) ran workshops about the possibilities of sustainable retail practices. Participants recognised that this is a global issue where the public has little knowledge of where our products come from, how they are made, or importantly how much greenhouse gas emissions are produced in manufacture. More transparency is needed across the production process and ties need to be strengthened with producers (local or global) to ensure more equality and support for garment workers to improve unsafe working conditions and more fair pay. Manchester's history as a giant in the textiles and cotton industry could be utilised so that the new 'Cottonopolis' can be a world leader in sustainable fashion and retail, acting as an inspiration to others across the world.

Damaging practices need to be dealt with at all levels for the protection of the environment, but there is also a requirement for retailers to meet certain ethical standards to pay workers fairly and support better industrial conditions overseas. A more proportionate tax system could be introduced for large corporate clothing producers and an ethical tax could be imposed on the biggest polluters and unethical/unsustainable manufacturers. Taxes per garment or item could ensure companies take responsibility to recycle clothes at end of life. Alternatively, enforcing manufacturers to include repair instructions on items, and to supply reconditioned items would help to curb the destructive fast fashion industry. Financial dis-incentives for fast fashion and unsustainable materials or a levy on

non-sustainable fashion would help to change manufacturing practice. A ban on fast fashion adverts, or tighter controls on unsustainable producers in advertising and promoting, could have the same positive effects as with the tobacco industry. Legislation also needs to be pushed for washing machines filters to capture harmful nanofibers in clothing and a tax or ban on harmful chemical processes and dyes for garments entering the UK should be imposed.

For consumers, a labelling system like in the food industry which details nutritional information should be adopted. Tags could provide information on the materials used, workforce origins, who gets paid what, production conditions, etc, would categorise the sustainability of clothes to inform buying decisions. A push for a sustainability scoring system for clothes (similar to the food traffic light system but for environmental footprint) would provide consumers with information they need to be able to make ethical and environmentally friendly informed choices.

Window displays or graphic stamps for 'ethical fashion hygiene stores' (like food hygiene) could be a good incentive for businesses. Reductions in rental and business rates costs or tax relief for any clothes repair stores and sustainable/ethical brands (such as Patagonia or stores that encourage repair and reconditioning of items) would discourage built in obsolescence.

Education was identified as crucial in encouraging people not to buy in to fast fashion and instead the positives of reusing and recreating should be championed. After school or community sewing and mending groups or create your own clothes workshops could help. Greater attention needs to be given to addressing the UK throw away culture (participants learned the average UK citizen buys 68 items a year, some worn only 2 or 3 times). Champions or celebrities of reusable or longer lasting clothing could be sought in the form of football clubs or popular figures to help change mindsets and highlight the amount of clothes purchased by consumers.

More information on how fabric is recycled is required, as there is no data on what happens to clothing waste bins and the recycling of cloth materials and fibres. Incentives could be explored for companies to take back clothes to reduce them back to fibre and repurpose. Second-hand textiles could be reprocessed for local commodity markets to increase capacity and agency amongst new Manchester makers.

Big brands and big stores should dedicate floor space to drop off points for reuse and repair and help promote and incentivise affordability of sustainable brands or lines. A pilot programme of reusable items in local shops could be introduced so consumers can buy new and used in all places. They could also give a discount on purchasing other items if old ones are brought back to add incentives. Dedicated shopping spaces in empty buildings could be utilised for independent second-hand repair shops (like the empty Debenhams building).

As vintage clothing is better quality and lasts longer than present day garments, councils should have a requirement to increase the number of second-hand shops on high streets and encourage initiatives that make them more appealing. Baby banks for all new-borns (similar to Scandinavian schemes) and encouraging the promotion of reusable nappies would also help to reduce harmful waste.

## Transport

Claire Stocks from Walk Ride Greater Manchester (https://walkridegm.org.uk) and the Our Streets Chorlton project (https://ourstreetschorlton.co.uk) highlighted the need to encourage and enable active travel options for people so they choose them over car use. For Manchester, the removal of through traffic from the city centre within five years (apart from access for emergency vehicles, deliveries, taxis, blue badge holders), in line with other progressive initiatives across the UK, was identified as a crucial step. Although there may be initial backlash, the benefits would quickly present themselves and could be celebrated. The introduction of 20mph as a city wide default speed limit (like in Paris) would also be of huge benefit. Influence and inspiration could be taken from other cities, like Birmingham's sectoral quadrant plan. A more localised approach to procurement like the Preston model could be explored with the introduction of a city import maximum cap initiative. Participants welcome the introduction of a ULEZ zone in Manchester up to the M60, but think that a traffic-free city centre is more beneficial than a congestion charge. Traffic slowing strategies (like Poynton shared car and pedestrian way) were celebrated. However, it was noted that most motorists do not drive the 20mph limit, highlighting the need to make public transport a realistic and attractive alternative. Effective role models and voices for living car free would provide valuable incentives.

It was identified that most journeys are less than one kilometre, so journey mapping evaluations of the costs of car vs public transport would help to inform responses. These could add to other meaningful targets and measures to reduce private car use by 2030, such as fully embedding walking and cycling in any new development, regeneration or highways plans (not just when funded by Bee Network initiatives).

Functional, well connected public owned control of key issues, like transport, that can make the biggest impacts on our carbon emissions is crucial. Sustainable transport is of multiple benefit to emissions, accessibility, public health and community resilience. The aim must be for public transport to cost less than driving, so public ownership of transport is vital and there is wide support for the Mayor's plans regarding this. An aim to make bus and train journeys cheaper must be paramount, as it is currently too expensive to travel distances by bus or train so people drive instead. Cheaper monthly bus tickets, or tickets which can have 5 different people on but be the same price as 1, and a price cap on train tickets (even for the longest journey) are good options. Although progress is being made, more link ups between public transport routes across the city are needed to increase reach, capacity and frequency in Greater Manchester. Joining up public transport tickets which connect different services would help. The feasibility of free public transport for necessary commutes or travel should also be trialled and explored.

Participants identified the need for the community to be engaged and input into future travel plans in the borough at a neighbourhood level (not the just city centre). Participants also request the introduction of the 15/20-min neighbourhood concept into local developments and housing. Demonstrator projects such as low-carbon mobility hubs or low-carbon neighbourhoods should be created to explore positive ways forward. A pipeline of more schemes involving bike lanes and active neighbourhoods should be developed in the next 12 months. Any funding and other opportunities for active travel support (e.g. grants) need to be championed and communicated well to continue this drive.

The entitlement currently given to cars on the street must change to allow more bike parking and social activity (like children's play equipment). To bring the public onboard with the advantages of this more one off street closures for social and awareness events should be held. Enabling more access to green spaces is also needed to build deep connections between local green, open spaces and communities. Social outdoor meeting places with rain protection (which can also help youth work provision) for educational events are also needed.

Participants welcome proposals for walking and cycling improvements or initiatives which present how to make transport more enjoyable, safe and accessible (especially for vulnerable groups and the elderly). Safety was highlighted as a major concern for many, leading to questions like: Are the roads safe enough for cycling? What can be done about this? Bicycle security and safety are key to improved access. A new bike hire scheme should be introduced (taking the learning points from the Mobike scheme) using a simple, app-based initiative (like Santander bikes) and should be trialled in the city. For example, the first 15-30 minutes could be free, then afterwards 5p per minute. E-bike and e-cargo bike hire/delivery schemes could compliment this. Numerous and accessible bike repair stops with tools, spare parts and learning and confidence initiatives should also be encouraged.

Where appropriate, car share schemes should be introduced as an option using the latest technology, taking the learning from what has worked well elsewhere. The expansion of electric vehicles should be pushed and car share schemes could incorporate this. Inequality regarding transport options is a major concern with car ownership (particularly multi-car households) being highest in affluent areas. Poorer areas often have fewer cars and worse transport links, which needs to be addressed. Disincentivising multiple car use is needed.

Neighbourhood forums and community involved masterplans would help explore what citizens mean by "safe" journeys and how they would like to improve them, helping to discover why people travel and then develop responses. A post Covid reduced need to travel means the values of working from home can be celebrated, with local support hubs ensuring social contact.

Regarding Manchester Airport, it was recognised that it brings in income for public services, but the carbon footprint is huge and this cannot be ignored. The availability of cheap flights that make other options unfeasible is of major concern. Does the taxpayer really want to subsidise cheap flights in the face of climate catastrophe? A Genuine carbon reduction plan for the airport is needed which has to involve staff and stakeholders of the airport, who need to be brought on board with this. The implementation of a Lucas style plan involving airport staff could help stakeholders plan for the mass reduction of flights needed.

At government level, this mandate requires a tax on aviation fuel at the same degree as petrol to be implemented. Other requirements involve the introduction of a levy for frequent flyers and a ration on flights. No airport expansions can be accepted until more sustainable methods of air travel are introduced, using more environmentally friendly technologies. A ban on short haul domestic flights (like they have in France) where journeys can be taken using cheaper and more reliable land based travel options is crucial. It is recognised that associated actions like the divestment from public body pensions in fossil fuels will be a challenge with Manchester Airport, but this is essential if we are to meet our carbon reduction targets and curb our greenhouse gas emissions.

## Food and Agriculture

Rachel Oelbaum from Manchester Food Board and the Foodsync project (https://www.foodsync.co.uk) presented on the vulnerabilities of the food supply chain and a need for greater food sovereignty and resilience. The links in the chain between producer and consumer need to be reduced. As national and international agri-business has a bigger part to play than any individual consumer, implementation of more sustainable practices at that level are crucial. Cattle farming for meat and dairy need to be reduced with initiatives towards more plant based consumption habits. Higher council tax (or other tax) for farms producing meat or dairy could be introduced. Changes in farmer subsidies (additional to Environmental Land Management schemes) which are not based on land ownership but on organic, permaculture or regenerative growing methods, weighted towards plant based diets, would encourage biodiverse positive farming. These schemes would not be available to meat or dairy industries. An all out ban on well researched damaging pesticides is required immediately. To help these aims, an environmental labelling / rating on food production or out of ten score will enable consumers to see the environmental impact of their choices and make informed decisions.

Greater awareness of the importance of seasonal and local diets needs to be a key aim. Restricting or lowering the amount of certain food stuffs at certain times of the year would help, introducing labels with a traffic light system for miles travelled, water and energy used in production, etc. Positive messaging of this and associated seasonality aisles at the front and centre of shops and supermarkets is vital, as well as greater education of the negative impacts of transportation and food miles.

As a city, Manchester can push for a national ban of harmful monocrop practices like palm oil. A palm oil free city campaign with associated education drives for this could be of considerable value. Delivery of takeaway food by motor vehicle/car can also be banned where a functioning active travel network is established. Educational campaigns for sustainable food in partnership with Manchester food retailers must be explored.

The demand for community produced food should be developed with an aim of becoming the default option for public contracts with the NHS and schools. To begin with, these should only source low impact food supply chains, whilst all school governors and headteachers introduce sustainable food policies and procurement of local food. Meanwhile, investment in 'incredible edible' style movements to encourage food growing in public spaces, community greenhouses and the reintroduction of municipal composting (and food/raw waste separation) is needed alongside educational schemes. Children and young people should be trained as food growers where environmental education and formal food growing and gardening clubs are championed.

Steps toward the elimination of food waste during transportation and at retail shops (through donation, reduction in price, or give away) has to be implemented. Strict food waste regulation (particularly for large stores like Tesco, Sainsburys, M&S etc) is a good start. Packaging also has to be reduced with an aim of no plastic packaging through a ban on non-compostable packaging being imposed. Until this is introduced, a heavier tax on plastic packaging needs to be enforced until it can be phased out in favour of sustainable or recyclable packaging options and refillable receptacles. Zero packaging and refillable stores should be incentivised with the aim for them to be in every neighbourhood where they are affordable and of high quality.

Internationalism is important and we need to involve countries who are more vulnerable to support local growing projects there. School partnership projects can help. Closer to home, we need to effectively utilise the land and expertise we have to grow what we can here. The repurposing of land for combined food production and biodiversity benefits would be huge benefit. For instance, three golf courses were identified in one local area, showing an inefficient use of land.

## Conclusions

There are many transferable ideas here that could be used across all the themes. The main requirements identified throughout the mandate are those of transparency, education and awareness of the reasons why positive responses are needed and are of value. Co-benefits of positive climate action need to be championed and celebrated (e.g. greening the city centre). Issues involving climate change cannot be tackled in isolation. Everyone involved needs to be part of the conversation and win-wins need to be identified where possible. Workers need to be kept in mind, as it was recognised plastic packaging is made by people who need to make a living. The actions we take must also address social inequalities. An all out ban on plastic packaging needs to also involve the provision of options in the form of green jobs that replace previous damaging practices.

We are aware many of the requirements here involve the transition of capitalism and wide scale system change. But we also recognise the scale of the climate emergency, and that global problems require global solutions. Variations in perceptions to the climate crisis must be taken into account. Not everyone feels it is relevant to them or has the capacity to change their lifestyle or behaviour, so need help and support in order explore this.

The emotional impact of the climate emergency cannot be ignored. Feelings such as guilt, grief, loss, anger, feeling overwhelmed, fear and sadness are all natural responses. Spaces need to be created for discussions of this impact on individuals and society, using language which is appropriate and relevant. These emotions need to be processed in order for people to be able to respond effectively. Understanding and support mechanisms are crucial for this to succeed. We need to educate everyone better about the climate emergency in an emotionally conscious manner. The voices and concerns of the future generation of children and young people in this process are especially vital. Therefore emotional support for schools and community groups need to be promoted. Caroline Hickman and others from the Climate Psychology Alliance (https://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org) offer advice and resources concerning this theme and all participants of the climate assembly valued their involvement.

This assembly identified three ways to sustainable action:

1. Self-care and the importance of your own mental and physical health on the effectiveness of your response and continued motivation and energy
2. Join a group or community where actions can be amplified and widened
3. Identify your superpower. Don't do too much on your own – we are together in this and everyone has a role to play which can be different but just as valuable.

People can feel too small to make any kind of difference and that the problem we face is so big that they don't know where to start. Guidance is needed to support emotionally informed strategies to move out of this space, which acknowledges people may feel threatened and there may be arguments or frustrations felt along the way. Many participants felt anger and frustration at those who have caused the climate crisis. Finding effective dialogue methods is crucial in bringing the people we need into the conversation, whether it's the majority of the population or those with vested interests and agendas. The aim has to be for people to want change, not resist it, so the focus has to be on influencing everyone about the positive aims and outcomes of this transition.

Through delay or inaction, there is a danger of paying the emotional and mental health cost 'twice', first in the anticipation, fear, anxiety and stress. Then second, when climate induced catastrophes like floods, droughts or wild fires intensify. One participant stated "I've done all I can for the last 50 years, and everyone I know has. Without the political will, nothing changes". Everyone needs to take responsibility and people need to be held to account. Now more than ever before in human history, effective leadership, political change and progressive guidance is needed.

The challenges of adapting and changing our society due to the climate emergency are unprecedented, but the alternatives offered by not acting are terrifying. Effective communication is crucial in bringing people together to work towards our common goal. Positive storytelling and reframing the challenge is key, because we can and we must fix this. We can all do more than we are currently doing.

This climate assembly marks a single yet important point in our transition towards a better society for us all. We have all the tools we need and all the issues are solvable. How do we get to a sustainable and carbon neutral 2038? Get everyone on board.