Friends of the Earth

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

FOR THE NEXT MAYOR OF GREATER MANCHESTER

10 priorities to protect people and planet and help the COVID-19 recovery

We're facing a climate and ecological emergency – the biggest threat we've ever seen to humanity's existence. What's more, we need to recover from the damage COVID-19 has done to businesses, jobs and livelihoods. This is the challenge that awaits the next Mayor of Greater Manchester

Whoever is elected as the next mayor can't single-handedly solve the crisis, but must use the powers they have to make as big a difference as possible. The mayor has a central role to play in providing a vision for the area, and will need to work with councils, businesses, local communities and the national government.

Tackling the climate, nature and COVID-19 crises must be done in a way which benefits everyone, no matter their income, race, age, or background. It's essential to address the sheer scale of inequalities that exist.

People who are most marginalised – both here in the UK and across the world – have done the least to cause climate breakdown and are the least able to rebound from its impacts.

People on lower incomes, and particularly black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, suffer most from the lack of nature and green space in our towns and cities. This is also true of air pollution, despite a smaller proportion of lower-income and BAME people owning cars than others.

Young people's futures are most at risk from climate breakdown and the decline of nature, and they're also disproportionately impacted by the economic impact of COVID-19.

The next mayor must also shift how the success of a COVID-19 recovery plan is measured. Rather than focusing on economic growth, metrics should identify whether the plan reduces poverty, decreases inequalities, increases wellbeing, and meets carbon reduction and nature restoration goals.

This Climate Action Plan will help the next mayor address the climate and ecological emergencies at the same time as responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

10 priorities the next Mayor of Greater Manchester should commit to:

1. Ensuring all infrastructure plans, programmes, and investment decisions – including plans to "build back better"' from COVID-19 – are in line with what's needed to address the climate and ecological emergency. And in line with the city region's carbon budget and carbon reduction pathway of reducing emissions by at least 15% per year and reaching net zero no later than 2038.
2. Ensuring those most impacted by climate breakdown and nature loss are heard and centre-stage in decision-making.
3. Protecting workers and communities through a just transition from a fossil fuel-dependent economy to a low-carbon, nature-rich, circular economy, including delivering the 26,639 jobs that a Local Government Association analysis says could be created in the region by 2030.
4. Introducing policies and measures that ensure new development is net zero carbon, and existing homes are brought up to high energy standards, thereby relegating fuel poverty to the history books.
5. At least doubling public transport use, cycling, and walking within the next 10 years, to cut climate emissions and ensure everyone can breathe clean air.
6. Powering the region with clean, renewable energy and reaping the economic and job opportunities it will bring, while ensuring fossil fuels are kept in the ground.
7. Greening the city-region by increasing tree cover, protecting nature, and eliminating green-space deprivation.
8. Becoming a zero-waste city-region by 2030 without reliance on landfill or incineration, to reduce pressures on nature from resource extraction and pollution.
9. Calling on the local government pension scheme to divest from fossil fuels to, stop profiting from environmental harm.
10. Creating an ambitious skills and training programme for the green economy, focusing on younger people, who are disproportionately impacted by both unemployment and climate breakdown.

What this looks like:

1 Ensuring all infrastructure plans, programmes, and investment decisions - including plans to "build back better" from COVID-19 - are in line with what's needed to address the climate and ecological emergency, and the city region's carbon budget and carbon reduction pathway of reducing emissions by at least 15% per year and reaching net zero no later than 2038.

Too many councils and combined authorities across the country are simultaneously declaring climate emergencies, while promoting more high-carbon infrastructure like new roads. They also continue to invest in fossil fuels and promote high-carbon activities such as aviation. The adage that "when you're in a hole, stop digging" is apt. All decisions need to be in line with what's needed to address the climate and ecological emergency.

Researchers at the Tyndall Centre have calculated Greater Manchester's carbon budget in alignment with the Paris agreement, would limit cumulative carbon dioxide emissions to under 71 million tonnes up to 2100. In order to meet this recommended budget Greater Manchester would need to reduce current annual emissions by more than two-thirds.

High-carbon developments throughout the city region, including expansion of Manchester Airport and plans for the Mottram bypass, Manchester North West Quadrant and the A555 to M60 through the Goyt Valley, are completely incompatible with getting on the right path to zero carbon.

The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework should enable net zero-carbon homes, liveable neighbourhoods accessible by sustainable transport, and access to green space and clean air for everyone as a priority.

Practical action:

The mayor should work with partners across the region to develop an ambitious infrastructure development plan that complies with scientifically robust carbon budgets and supports nature recovery. This will involve working with local councils, the business sector, public services, trade unions, universities, and civil society. Infrastructure needed to tackle the climate and ecological emergency includes large-scale programmes for building segregated cycleways and trams, new renewable energy capacity, new green spaces in areas suffering from green-space deprivation, and retrofitting houses with energy efficiency and eco-heating on an area-by-area basis. These programmes would create much needed jobs and help COVID-19 recovery.

The mayor should use their influence within the region and at national level to ensure an infrastructure programme for climate and nature is fully resourced. All existing major schemes should be reviewed to ensure they are compliant.

2 Ensuring those most impacted by climate breakdown and nature loss are heard and centre-stage in decision-making.

In Greater Manchester, 577 neighbourhoods have been identified by researchers as being particularly vulnerable to surface flooding due to their location and demographics (for example, age or income). Flooding and extreme heat will both be exacerbated by climate breakdown.

In addition, 63 neighbourhoods have been identified as among those most deprived of green space in England. Green space is essential for physical and mental health and the lack of it in some areas has become very apparent during COVID-19 lockdowns. It must also be recognised that those who have done least to contribute to climate breakdown are often the most vulnerable to its effects.

Practical action:

The mayor must commit to involving all citizens, but especially young people and the most vulnerable communities, in decision-making and action planning. The mayor must also recognise the impact of decisions made today on the wellbeing of future generations and commit to youth representation on

the governance structures within the region.

Deliberative democracy approaches, like citizen juries, citizen assemblies and participatory mapping and budgeting, should be used, especially for complicated or contentious choices.

Spending on climate change adaptation and nature restoration should focus on the most vulnerable communities.

3 Protecting workers and communities through a just transition from a fossil fuel-dependent economy to a low-carbon, nature-rich, circular economy, including delivering 26,639 new jobs in the region by 2030.

Green jobs and training will both be necessary to achieve a credible and sustainable plan for the region and to help the region's economy recover from the pandemic. The green economy is already the fastest growing part of the UK economy and action in this area will benefit the region.

The Local Government Association (LGA) says nearly 0.7 million direct jobs could be created in England's low-carbon and renewable-energy economy by 2030, rising to more than 1.18 million by 2050. Developing green industry, jobs and training programmes are essential to the future of Greater Manchester.

The LGA analysis suggests the region could benefit from 26,639 jobs over the next decade. That includes a potential 4,535 jobs in low-carbon electricity, 7,988 in low-carbon heat, 1,144 in alternative fuels, 7,308 in energy-efficiency, 2,722 in low-carbon services, and 2,942 in low emissions vehicles and related infrastructure.

Practical action:

The mayor should invest in green jobs, apprenticeships, and sustainable enterprise, leaving no communities behind. The job losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic mean that plans, investments and decisions to build the green economy, in sectors such as renewable energy, housing retrofit, sustainable transport, nature restoration and the circular economy, must be fast-tracked and prioritised. The mayor must push for the UK government to give councils the resources and powers to accelerate skills development. The mayor must also work with businesses, unions and others to develop locally relevant transition plans and for local investment to develop new employment within these sectors.

The mayor should empower workers and residents with the knowledge and motivation to act through programmes such as Carbon Literacy.

4 Introducing policies and measures that ensure new development is net zero carbon and existing homes are brought up to high energy standards, thereby relegating fuel poverty to the history books.

Any new homes and developments need to be built as net zero carbon. But most of the buildings that will be in use over the next 50 years have already been built. Only 40% of homes are currently well insulated in Greater Manchester. This represents a shocking waste of energy, high greenhouse gas emissions and unnecessarily high energy bills.

12% of households in the area are in fuel poverty, which means they can't afford to heat their homes properly. Poor insulation contributes to this problem. With more people at home because of unemployment resulting from COVID-19 or increased home working, this problem will get worse without urgent action.

Practical action:

All homes must be brought up to high energy-efficiency standards by rolling out an area-by-area retrofit and heat pump-installation programme, ending the misery of cold, expensive-to-heat homes. 78,766 homes need to be insulated every year within Greater Manchester to ensure all homes are

properly insulated by 2030.

In addition, the transition away from gas-fired boilers in our homes to eco-heating systems needs to be well underway. At least 47,324 heat pumps need to be fitted every year in Greater Manchester.

All new development must be net zero carbon, including all housing as standard, starting immediately.

The mayor must also resist the call from the gas industry to move to hydrogen made from natural gas. Unlike making hydrogen from renewable energy, making it from natural gas is dirty, as all the carbon pollution can't be captured and fugitive emissions from gas extraction and transportation remain. It also won't be practically possible for at least ten years, because there are no existing carbon storage facilities. We need to cut carbon emissions rapidly, within the next ten years. Energy efficiency, heat pumps and heat batteries are much more sustainable solutions and ready right now.

5 At least doubling public transport use, cycling, and walking within the next 10 years, to cut climate emissions and ensure everyone can breathe clean air.

Greater Manchester must achieve a dramatic change to transport infrastructure and travel habits, so that using public transport (when it's safe to do so) or cycling and walking become the default options. Enabling people to get around with minimum impact on the environment will also bring about big improvements in air quality. Everybody should be able to live decently and get about without needing a car. Across the UK, almost 50% of the lowest income families (people in the bottom 20% income bracket) don't have access to a car. The proportion of women that don't have access to one is twice that of men. Access to alternatives to car ownership is a social justice and social cohesion issue, as well as an environmental issue.

Air pollution is a real problem across the area and legal limits for the toxic gas nitrogen dioxide are breached in all boroughs. Fine particulate matter air pollution is the most damaging to health, and even World Health Organisation standards aren't considered "safe". Greater Manchester has the highest rates of emergency admissions to hospitals for asthma in the whole country.

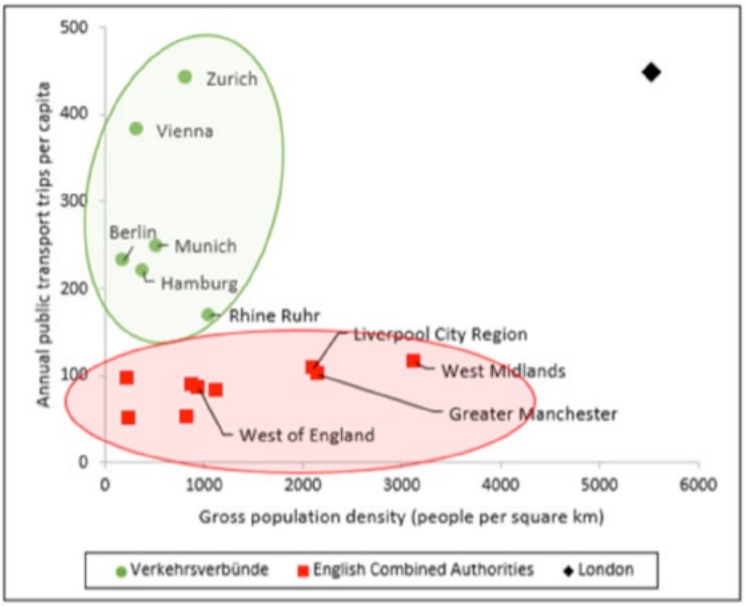
The mayor must protect the health of local people and ensure that the proposed Clean Air Zone is implemented across the whole of the city region, together with an Ultra Low Emission Zone in Manchester city centre, to ensure air quality standards are met in the shortest time possible.

Practical action:

On mainland Europe many places provide much better public transport. As a result, levels of public transport use are 3 to 4 times higher than they are in the UK's combined authority areas (see graph: Verkehrsverbünde are integrated regional public transport services).

To double public transport use, cycling and walking, the barriers to a good transport system need to be removed. The mayor should re-regulate buses and commit to delivering a world-class bus network. By bringing buses under public control, the mayor can properly plan and expand the network and deliver frequent, reliable and affordable services. In mainland Europe some regions also control suburban trains as well as buses.

Greater Manchester can also do much better at providing safe cycling routes. Research shows that 29% of commuter journeys in the region could be by bike if there was good cycling infrastructure, such as segregated cycleways and the uptake of e-bikes. A



Annual per capita public transport trips in six continental Verkehrsverbünde (Transport Authorities), the English Combined Authorities, and London

comprehensive network of safe segregated cycle routes and safe streets for walking, as set out in the ambitious Beelines proposal for Greater Manchester, must remain the goal. The mayor should review progress on the Beelines network ambition and commit to delivering the full proposal.

Pop-up cycle lanes, low traffic neighbourhoods and other active travel measures introduced as part of the emergency response to COVID-19 should be kept in place wherever possible, and new routes should be connected across the region. It's really important to build community support for these changes and consult in advance about new routes and measures.

Currently only around a third of commuter journeys in Greater Manchester are by walking, cycling and public transport. As a bare minimum, the mayor should work to increase this to 60% by 2030. Money to achieve this transformation can be raised through schemes like the Workplace Parking Levy successfully pioneered by Nottingham City Council.

6 Powering the region with clean, renewable energy, reaping the economic and job opportunities it will bring, while ensuring fossil fuels are kept in the ground.

A rapid growth in renewable energy is needed to wean the UK off electricity produced by fossil fuels and to provide the extra electricity needed to heat homes and power transport. Some of this renewable energy can be provided in Greater Manchester.

Local renewable energy production is currently only around a quarter of the estimated technical potential of the city region, with solar PV offering the greatest potential.

Practical action:

Sustainable energy infrastructure and renewable energy production must be delivered across the region in partnership with local authorities, communities, and energy utilities. In particular, community ownership of renewable energy should be encouraged and supported, learning from existing organisations such as Greater Manchester Community Renewables, a volunteer-run community-benefit society that's generated clean electricity through the installation of solar panels on schools and community centres.

Currently 371,254 GWh of renewable energy is generated in Greater Manchester. This is equal to only 2% of household energy use. If every council area within the region matched the best similar areas, then 1,986,702 GWh could be produced.

In addition, all public purchasing of energy should be from 100% renewable power.

7 Greening the city region by increasing tree cover, protecting nature, and eliminating green-space deprivation.

Access to good quality green space is essential for people's physical and mental health. Green space, trees and other "green infrastructure" are also essential for nature. Friends of the Earth has used data on green space, gardens, and open-access land to rate access to green space for neighbourhoods in the region (a map is available here). Results unsurprisingly show that low income and BAME communities are worst off when it comes to access to green space.

Practical action:

In Greater Manchester there are 63 neighbourhoods rated E (the most green-space deprived). The region should aim to eliminate green-space deprivation by ensuring everybody has access to enough good quality green space. In some areas this might mean opening up school grounds outside of school hours or converting some streets or carparks into public green space. It also means increasing tree cover with more street trees and growing more trees and woods on council-owned land. Friends of the Earth has produced a map identifying where new woodlands could be planted outside urban areas.

8 Becoming a zero-waste city region by 2030 without reliance on landfill or incineration to reduce pressures on nature from resource extraction and pollution.

Only 49% of household waste in Greater Manchester is reused, recycled, or composted. The best local authorities in Wales are achieving more than 70%.

Incineration, or so called energy from waste, is not a sustainable alternative. It's even more carbon polluting than gas-fired power stations and it contributes to local air pollution.

Practical action:

Greater Manchester should aim for 70% of household waste to be reused, recycled, or composted by 2025, and to achieve zero waste by 2030.

The mayor should also bring in doorstep food-waste recycling across the region and make it easier for people and businesses to stop sending waste to landfill or incineration.

9 Calling on the local government pension scheme to divest from fossil fuels, to stop profiting from environmental harm.

Local government pension schemes are contributing to the climate crisis by investing in climate-wrecking gas, oil, and coal companies. This investment is leading to the loss of lives and livelihoods, and the displacement of people from their homes due to extreme weather.

The Greater Manchester Pension Fund is the dirtiest pension fund in the country, with over £1.8 billion invested in fossil fuels.

Practical action:

The mayor should publicly call for the Greater Manchester Pension Fund to divest from fossil fuels and engage directly with the local authorities that control these funds, encouraging them to make immediate commitments to divest from all fossil fuels.

10 Creating an ambitious skills and training programme for the green economy, focusing on younger people, who are disproportionately impacted by both unemployment and climate breakdown.

The transition to a green economy will create job opportunities and demand new skills. Significant skills gaps are already holding back the growth of the green economy in Greater Manchester. Meanwhile, younger people have the highest unemployment level of all age groups, and the unemployment rate among 18-24 year-olds in Greater Manchester is 11%, compared to the UK average of 9.2%.

Consultation with young people, as part of Greater Manchester's Young Person Guarantee initiative, found that the two top issues of most importance to young people are jobs and training, and climate and the environment.

Practical action:

The mayor has a key role in shaping skills training and priority sectors for Greater Manchester. The green economy and low carbon sector must be prioritised to plug the skills gap and ensure we have the skilled workforce needed to respond to the climate emergency, for example to insulate and install low-carbon heating for tens of thousands of homes every year. Younger people, who are on the frontline of unemployment and the climate crisis, must be enabled and supported to access appropriate training and apprenticeships.

The mayor should work with youth representatives, trade unions, colleges, training providers, businesses and the youth climate movement to devise an ambitious programme of skills training and apprenticeships for the green economy.

Focusing skills development across Greater Manchester on the emerging green economy provides a golden opportunity to rise to the multiple challenges of the climate emergency, the COVID-19 economic downturn, and the economic exclusion of young people.

Notes and further information

Details of the methodology, data sources and targets used are available.

A summary report on green space deprivation, together with links to a map and full report, is available.

The graph in the transport section is taken from A radical transport response to the climate emergency by Transport for Quality of Life, Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace.

The estimate of renewable energy capacity in the area outlined in point 6 excludes offshore wind. It also excludes biomass energy, because some biomass sources can have a large carbon footprint and harm biodiversity. And it excludes incineration, because of its very high carbon emissions.