



Climate Emergency one year on: What Manchester Says

A 1st birthday report compiled by Climate Emergency Manchester

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Background

From '[Deeds Not Words](#)', Climate Emergency Manchester's first report, published on 22nd July 2019

Can Manchester genuinely get to carbon zero in just over ten years?

Professor Kevin Anderson: "In isolation, if no one else was doing anything, and if they continue to do nothing, I think probably it would be fairly clear that "no" would be the answer. However just you could also postulate Manchester genuinely trying to go down that route, and then that triggering some other cities. So perhaps Oslo follows suit, maybe Nottingham, maybe Bristol. Maybe then we start to see Paris and some other cities start to follow a similar route. Now if that starts to happen in three or four years you can start a new momentum which we would find hard to anticipate today." "It may well be that if Manchester tried to do that it could be the catalyst."

Whether 2038 or 2030, it is clear that rapid forward motion is needed. It is also clear from the latest reports that Manchester is a long way from achieving any targets, with only 2.5% reduction being achieved against a 13% target last year. A plan to make a plan is not enough. CEM calls on the council for a draft implementation plan for specific elements of the 10th July Climate Emergency Motion to be presented to the scrutiny committee meetings in early September for comment from elected members and members of the public. A final plan should be presented to the six committees in October.

The following actions need to be undertaken immediately, given that this IS an emergency.

- **Ward level engagement** - all 32 wards to have agreed Local Climate Champions - one councillor to champion climate action and engagement within ward.
- **Create temporary team from senior council management** which reports to chief executive with full time project management support to create implementation plan. Part of remit of group to put together longer-term team to deliver implementation plan
- **The immediate need is for draft implementation plans** to be presented to Scrutiny Committees in September for the following elements of the motion Element 2 (the zero carbon date) Element 4 (the liaison with all 32 wards by April 2020) Element 9 (Manchester's aviation emissions) Element 11 (for all members and staff to be zero carbon by the end of 2020)
- **Communication of climate emergency** is a key part of engagement of city. ALL council communications channels to ALL target audiences to include the message that MCC have declared a climate emergency, we're fighting for our futures - along with a link to a dedicated page (see Appendix 5 of this report)
- **Establish a seventh scrutiny committee** dedicated to climate to convene asap. The first job for committee to identify plans in progress but not yet actioned which are incompatible with declaration of emergency

What Manchester City Council promised

On 10th July 2019, Manchester City Council declared a climate emergency. This was their declaration:

This Council agrees (or to the extent that the below concern executive functions, recommends to the Executive) to:

- Declare a Climate Emergency;
- Continue working with partners across Manchester and GMCA to deliver the 2038 target, and determine if an earlier target can be possible, through a transparent and open review. Become carbon neutral by the earliest possible date;
- Encourage involvement in all wards by April 2020 through meetings as part of the Our Manchester strategy, to identify residents and partners who want to be actively involved in achieving the target, with provision for those who cannot attend. Ensure ward plans contain specific, measurable, achievable steps;
- Review all policies, processes and procedures to ensure the council can become carbon neutral. Present an action plan by March 2020 detailing how the city can stay within its carbon budget. Report back regularly to the NESC. Review the corporate plan;
- Work with the Tyndall Centre to review the actual emissions from aviation. Investigate the best way to include aviation in our overall carbon reduction programme in the long term
- Make climate breakdown and the environment, an integral part of activity throughout the Council, including all decision making, ensuring key decisions take into account the impact on achieving the zero-carbon target and including an environmental impact assessment in all relevant committee reports;
- Ensure that everyone in the council receives carbon literacy training by the end of 2020. Make attendance easier by varying times and length of sessions;
- Encourage all staff on council business to use the lowest carbon, appropriate, travel;
- Investigate measures to ensure future procurement is carbon neutral. Increase the percentage of social value with an additional environmental element;
- Work with suppliers to green their supply chains, and support local production;
- Work with training providers to ensure Manchester residents can take on green jobs;
- Investigate and introduce measures to help reach domestic zero carbon levels including addressing fuel poverty and retrofitting existing homes;
- Investigate ways to ensure that future local plans place a mandatory requirement for all new development to be net zero carbon by the earliest possible date;
- Push GMCA to decarbonise public transport, heat and energy as early as possible;
- Through our role on GMPF, encourage divestment in fossil fuels as early as possible;
- Explore the possibility of introducing a 2030 target in line with the IPCC report;
- and request that a report on its viability be brought back to the Executive before the end of the year;
- Call on the government to:

- provide powers and resources to make the zero-carbon target possible including funding for big capital projects
- accelerate the reduction of carbon emissions from aviation
- accelerate the decarbonisation of the electricity grid, funding low carbon energy generation
- ensure that the UK prosperity fund focuses on enable the transition to a low carbon economy”

Timeline of the past year

10 July 2019 - Manchester City Council (MCC) declares a Climate Emergency

17 October 2019 - MCC Planning Committee [approves large car park](#) on site of Central Retail Park

22 October 2019 - First meeting of [MCC Climate Change Sub-Group](#)

November 2019- CEM’s ‘With Love and Rockets’ report - full of practical ideas about what could be done, is sent to the Council. No acknowledgement is made.

January 2020 - First ward meetings in a handful of wards ([Moss Side](#), [Chorlton](#), Chorlton Park)

31st January 2020 - Agenda for February meeting of the NESC shows that the promised Zero-Carbon Framework, 2020-2038 has become a five-year plan 2020-2025

5th February 2020 - Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee (NESC) [up in arms](#) about confusion surrounding the Climate Action Plan, 2020-2025

14th February 2020 - Manchester City Council Planning Committee [approves new 729-space carpark](#) near Manchester Airport

4th March 2020 - NESC [recommend](#) that Climate Action Plans and Framework 2020-5 should go to Executive

11th March 2020 - Executive of Manchester City Council approves Climate Action Plan and Framework

5th June 2020 - MCC reveals that it will [not be supporting pop-up cycle lanes](#)

24 June 2020 - First meeting of [Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee](#) since lockdown

What Manchester says

We asked groups concerned with climate across Manchester for their thoughts on the Council's achievements a year on from the declaration, the action they want the council to take, and what citizens in Manchester have to do next. This is what they had to say (answers unedited):

Climate Emergency Manchester

www.climateemergencymanchester.net

Twitter @climateemergmcr Email: contact@climateemergencymanchester.net

What did you hope the Council would do?

We hoped that they might take their own words seriously this time, and actually launch immediate, wide-ranging activity. Deeds not words. We hoped to see regular honest communications from senior officers and executive members, explaining the nature of climate change and the action required to diverse audiences.

We hoped to see lots of good meetings happening in all 32 wards, with linkages forming between councillors and citizens across the wards.

We hoped to see big financial investments in on-the ground action.

But we weren't naive.

What do you think the Council has done? (and has not done)

The evidence the Council has had to release to us (because we used the Freedom of Information Act when producing our 'Hung Drawn and Quarterly reports) reveals that really, nothing has been done. This does not surprise us, but it enrages us. We refuse to let it demoralise us.

What specific thing(s) do you think the Council needs to do in the next three months?

Well, a year has been wasted. But we don't have a time machine. Every single ward needs one of its three councillors as a ward champion, who is blogging, Tweeting, Facebooking and where possible meeting with constituents, galvanising action, building connections within the ward, and with neighbouring wards and across the city.

The Executive Member for the Environment Transport and Planning needs to start answering questions, and not dismiss scrutiny and criticism. Specifically, taking bold action on pop-up cycle lanes.

What do we as citizens and groups need to do next?

We need to resist the siren-call of despair and demoralisation. We need to support each other with that. We have to stay in this fight, and bring new people, new skills, new tactics in. We have to build and maintain functional groups and connections. We have to challenge bullshit, openly, and keep putting forward radical but doable ideas. We need to be ready for the change in Council leadership which will, at some point, come. To do this, we as CEM have begun work on the Active Citizenship Toolkit.

contact@climateemergencymanchester.net and on

Manchester Green Party

<https://manchester.greenparty.org.uk/>

Twitter: @McrGreenParty

What did you hope the Council would do?

- (i) Put tackling climate change as the overarching and under-pinning aspect of all that it does and stands for as an organisation. As we have seen with COVID19, if there is an emergency then all aspects of life, business, work, leisure, care, health etc are reconsidered in the light of the new reality. This is what should have happened with climate change. It is not a "nice to have if you can afford it" add-on.
- (ii) Set itself up to be accountable to Manchester citizens. Setting up the Manchester Climate Change Partnership and Agency and engaging the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research to review and advise, were good moves as far as they went. However, right from the beginning there should have been an external audit process put in place in addition to the internal scrutiny of climate change progress.
- (iii) Put creating a robust financial plan for allocating funding and applying for additional funding to tackle climate change as one of their highest priorities

What do you think the Council has done?

There have been a lot of words written on what the Council has done, is doing and plans to do. There has been some progress made, but it has been piecemeal and lacking the vision that is a need to hit the target of Manchester being a zero-carbon city by 2038.

What specific thing(s) do you think the Council needs to do in the next three months?

(i) Seize the opportunity created by the current situation around COVID19 to try to change behaviour around active travel.

(ii) In the very short term the Overview and Scrutiny Climate Change Subgroup should start meeting again, and planning needs to be opened up to scrutiny again.

(iii) Set up a 7th Scrutiny Committee for Climate Change. In the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee discussion on climate change is often rushed or squeezed out.

(iv) Look into the economic strategy of the Council and its dependence on city centre development and growth and airport related growth. Take action into ending the Council's investment in fossil fuels and put pressure on funds the Council is part of but not the sole manager of.

The Council have a huge task on their hands with the financial black hole cause by COVID19. But the way out of this is not to rely on city centre and airport growth - not only for climate target reasons, but because they will not deliver financially given the way the world has changed.

When the Manchester Local Plan is drafted later this year there should be a drastic overhaul of the principles the Consultation Document is based on.

What do we as citizens need to do next?

(i) Vote for local councillors who are committed to putting climate change at the top of the Council's agenda

(ii) Keep holding the Council to account via existing scrutiny channels, and insist that these channels are kept as open and operational as possible

(iii) Push for the setting up of a 7th Scrutiny Committee to radically improve scrutiny of climate change. Climate Change is a difficult subject for individual citizens to scrutinise on their own, because of the huge amount of technical detail involved. They need to be confident that the Council's activities in this area are as open and transparent as possible, and subject to both internal and external scrutiny.

MCR Labour for Green New Deal

<https://www.facebook.com/gndmanchester/>

Twitter: @mcrLabGND

What did you hope the Council would do?

Knowing Manchester City Council as we do, I'm not sure any of us really believed that the declaration would result in meaningful action. For us, it was as much about gaining leverage in future disputes over development, investment and transport as anything else. In a dream scenario we'd have seen divestment plans for Greater Manchester Pension Fund and

Manchester airport, commitment to the protection of existing green spaces and support for local residents' campaigns.

What do you think the council has done?

Suspended the planning committee to approve damaging development by the back door, bailed out the airport to the tune of £250 million and approved a whole load of car parks.

What specific thing(s) do you think the Council needs to do in the next three months?

The pandemic has presented the Council with an opportunity to enact a green recovery. The pop-up cycle lanes should be extended and made permanent, as should the pedestrianisation of Deansgate and Stevenson Square. The planning committee should be reinstated immediately. Manchester City Council must take the scale of the crisis seriously and bring its zero-carbon target down to 2030, in line with the science.

What do we as citizens need to do next?

All climate justice campaigners should convene as soon as possible and set out a strategic plan for the city.

Manchester Liberal Democrats

<http://www.mcrlibdems.org.uk/>

Twitter: @MCRLibDems

What did you hope the Council would do?

The Manchester Liberal Democrats welcomed the climate emergency declaration, which was passed unanimously one year ago. In this declaration, a Liberal Democrat amendment passed for the first time in a decade, bringing forward the carbon neutrality date by 8 years, from 2038 to 2030. We hoped therefore this would set a new course of policy and direction for our city, one in which cross-party collaboration allows us to transition away from a fossil fuel economy, prevent climate breakdown, and adapt to existing changes to climate.

What do you think the Council has done?

Instead, Manchester City Council has displayed an unwillingness and intransigence to act on climate change. Emissions statistics have been inaccurately reported, little new resources if any have been sought to tackle climate breakdown, few council staff have been trained in 'carbon literacy', and public meetings on this issue are scarce.

At the budget meeting before lockdown, Manchester City Council gifted each councillor a tree sapling to plant in their wards, while a Lib Dem amendment to grant each ward significant money for community projects was not chosen. Over the last 20 years, more than 34,000 trees have been lost due to development in Manchester.

What we have seen is a PR campaign to brand vanity projects and development strategies as "green" and "eco-friendly", while pursuing business as usual, and congratulating themselves as they do so.

What specific thing(s) do you think the Council needs to do in the next three months?

In the next three months, Manchester City Council needs to take action on the following things:

- Halt plans to build new public car parks.
- Publicly report the full review of all council policy, processes and procedures for becoming carbon neutral. This has only occurred in some policies.
- Implement short-term pop-up cycle lanes and close roads in the city centre to hand more space over to active travel.
- Begin mass replanting of trees to account for 34,000 trees lost due to development over 20 years.

- Hold wider engagement meetings to influence action plans.
- Fully establish a 7th scrutiny committee to address climate change instead of a subcommittee.

- Work from the Tyndall Centre and Manchester Climate Change Agency needs to be guaranteed to be included in any and all action plans in a timely manner.

- Publicly report how many councillors and council staff have received carbon literacy training, and publish plans to conduct any outstanding training by the end of 2020.

What do we as citizens need to do next?

Manchester Liberal Democrats believe that climate breakdown is too important an issue for any single party or faction to address. We must collaborate, and there must be space for involvement with opposition parties, campaign groups and individual members of the public. It is all of us who face the consequences of climate inaction.

Unfortunately, as Manchester Labour currently hold 93 out of 96 seats on the council, there is little to no room for genuine scrutiny of council policy and processes. The Executive can set the agenda, while backbench councillors are able to save face with the public by claiming they tried to exert influence. This exemplifies the paralysis that local authorities are experiencing on climate change; influence from within is watered down and dissent is quietened.

As citizens, we must keep contacting our local councillors and MPs and tell them they must speak out on these issues. We must keep presenting petitions, and campaign groups must continue to work together across the city of Manchester to gain public support and pressure the council.

However, most importantly we should identify those who are speaking out about climate change, and those who are putting in the work in their communities. Only by electing engaged voices who will speak out against climate inaction, will we see progress on this issue in Manchester.

Rising Up! Mcr Families

<https://risingupmcr.org/>

Twitter: @RisingUpMcr

It is difficult to answer these questions succinctly because of course you would hope that a year is a long time in an "emergency", that a lot would have been achieved. At the same time this has been a very difficult year, with a general election won by the current government and of course with a global pandemic.

But of course the reality is that we are going to face more and more of these challenges and shocks. Covid19 didn't come from nowhere, it has been an expected and predicted result of human misuse of the earth and we are told that more pandemics are likely. At the same time environmental factors such as dirty polluted air, which is our reality in Manchester, have been shown to worsen the impact of illnesses such as covid19.

The declaration of climate emergency needed to be interwoven into all the council functions. The council needed at the very least to create a dedicated team within the Chief Exec, with a lead officer of sufficient seniority and a project manager to ensure that all parts of the council are taking the emergency, which threatens every aspect of residents lives, into account. Because only then, as we face each new challenge, would they be able to react in a way which seeks to protect residents from future shocks and pain.

Instead they seem to be choosing to pretend that none of it is happening, carrying on with the same strategies and solutions they have used for years. Widen roads, build more car parks,

get in developers, sell the city off, ignore the questions about what we do when there's nothing left to sell and how residents, especially those who are struggling, are supposed to cope.

What do we want Manchester council to do?

Well, as above, to make the climate emergency a central part of council business. To centre plans around protecting the most vulnerable. Because the issues which face us are interconnected.

Food insecurity is a real issue which is only going to grow with the levels of unemployment we are facing and with a No Deal Brexit looming. While the problems are bigger than a local authority can fully address we have to do everything we can to lessen the pain, including looking at every possible way to increase urban food production. Utilising methods such as food forests would give residents healthy food with low carbon footprints, would help the most vulnerable, at the same time as supporting vital insect life and other wildlife.

Air pollution is a problem for everyone in Manchester but it is more of a problem for those who live in less affluent areas. Who are also more likely to be amongst the third of Mancunians who don't own a car. So now that covid19 has hit the viability of public transport safe cycle lanes are a matter of social justice. Manchester City Council alone of all the GM councils as chosen not to put pop up cycle lanes along major roads.

What can citizens do?

Get involved in whatever way you can because it is left to a surprisingly small number of people to take action and unless this changes nothing will change. Set yourself a target of even just ten minutes a day to lobby, sign petitions, do something. Talk to your councillors. Make sure they are aware of how important you think it is that action is taken on these issues. There are some great councillors but they face an uphill battle. Make it clear that you won't re-elect those who continually fail us. Educate yourself about issues, join protests, demand change is made. Speak to neighbours, start Incredible Edible type schemes, Transition Town initiatives and so on. And keep reminding Manchester City Council that it is an emergency and we need them to act accordingly.

Save Ryebank Fields

<https://www.saveryebankfields.org/>

Twitter: @ryebankfields

What did you hope the Council would do?

Locally we hoped the Council would work with us to save Ryebank Fields. More generally we hoped for the protection of green spaces and trees, more cycling lanes, more local food

production and growing and an end to their reliance on fossil fuel industries such as the airport.

What do you think the Council has done?

They have signed a Climate Emergency, the words are there but not the action!

What specific thing(s) do you think the Council needs to do in the next three months?

In the next three months they need to reinstate the planning committee to ensure democracy, end their cosy relationships with property developers, retrofit and work with existing buildings, build cycling lanes, increase “green” jobs and start listening to their constituents.

What do we as citizens need to do next?

Citizens need to lobby their MP’s and protest more.

XR Manchester

<https://xrmcr.org/>

Twitter: @XR_MCR

What did you hope the Council would do?

- A proper plan of how the council itself would operate carbon neutrally as soon as it can - by 2025 is ambitious 2030 doable!?
- Anything
- A plan to cease carbon emissions by 2025 and involving citizens using the Our Manchester approach to how that is achieved
- Introduce urgently a cycling strategy for Manchester including reductions in car usage and banning cars from city centre
- Changes through TFGM on bus services affecting air pollution

What do you think the Council has done?

- Nothing
- Minimal urgent actions and impact
- A lot of talk

What specific thing(s) do you think the Council needs to do in the next three months?

- A little less talk and a lot more action
- Stop emissions especially the airport
- Have a detailed plan on air pollution given it was the subject of the Director of Population Health annual report 2019 as it is known avoidable deaths are being caused

- Have a detailed plan about how the city can learn from the reduction in carbon emissions during the Covid-19 crisis
- Introduce effective cycle lanes on all city main roads

What do we as citizens need to do next?

- Take personal actions to reduce our carbon footprint through not flying or using cars, home insulation and food choices
- Stop flying and buying unnecessarily
- Hold the Council to account on the plan it has produced and is monitoring
- Protest to ensure this is an electoral issue for Manchester citizens
- Hold action to publicise the Council's inactions and apply public pressure on councillors

Youth Strike Manchester

Twitter: @YouthStrikeMCR

Instagram: @youthstrikemcr

What did you hope the Council would do?

I hoped that the council would have taken it into consideration when making decisions ~ for example when the planning was approved for a car park to be built instead of a new green space in Manchester as we lack them. I also hoped that it would have created greater change however it wasn't widely known to people that the council had done that.

What do you think the Council has done?

Nothing major, it seems as though they declared it to keep people idle and to get people to carry on. There are a lot of talks but not enough action happening

What specific thing(s) do you think the Council needs to do in the next three months?

I think that Manchester council have to take the climate crisis seriously ~ it's all very and well saying that we have a climate emergency but without actions what's the point?

What do we as citizens need to do next?

We as citizens need to keep pressure on the council to implement more changes like more green spaces and an improvement in public transport.

Take Action

Find out who your three councillors are via [this page on manchester.gov.uk](#)

Write each of them a **separate** letter. Personalise it! This below is only a guide.

Dear Councillor x,

I hope you and your family are well and safe during these incredibly stressful times. Before anything else, I should say that by all accounts, Manchester City Council has done a brilliant job protecting the most vulnerable people. The thanks extended to staff by various Executive Members at recent members are clearly richly deserved.

I am writing to you because I would like to see Manchester City Council respond to the longer-term, and currently less dramatic, threat of climate change.

I know that you voted for the Climate Emergency Declaration, a year ago today. I am keen to learn from you

- a) What actions you have taken as a councillor in the last year to mobilise and motivate people in this ward (speeches, meetings, blog posts, undertaking carbon literacy training).
- b) What actions have been completed in the ward to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and to prepare for the changes to come. (and whether the ward officers and other relevant staff have undertaken their carbon literacy training)
- c) What actions you personally have taken as a councillor on the various committees you sit on to push climate change further up the agenda, and make sure that the response matches the urgency

These questions have been about the last year. What I am also very keen to learn from you is what you think can and should be done in our ward in the next three months, the next six months and the next year and how I as a resident can be involved. Are there upcoming meetings planned (online or socially distanced) that I can be involved in?

I hope to hear back from you in the next week.

Yours sincerely

Name

Address

Email us at contact@climateemergencymanchester.net when you have done this and we will add “contacted” next to the Councillors names on a public spreadsheet (but we will NEVER publish your name or details anywhere).

Get involved

Climate Emergency Manchester formed in March 2019, and consists of a core group of five individuals and a wider network of supporters. We are concerned with holding Manchester City Council to account over its climate emergency declaration, whilst connecting citizens in Manchester who are concerned about climate change.

We have a [petition](#) for a seventh scrutiny committee to examine climate policy -anyone who lives, works or studies within the City Council's boundaries can sign it. If you don't, but you know people who do, please alert them.

We are also creating an [Active Citizenship Toolkit](#), to raise our own skills and knowledge, and help others do the same.

If you're interested in getting involved in any of our projects, at any amount of time commitment, you can email us at contact@climateemergencymanchester.net. You can also find more information on our [website](#).