

# Hung Drawn and Quarterly #007

What has Manchester City Council (not) done on the climate emergency in the last 3 months?



[www.climateemergencymanchester.net](http://www.climateemergencymanchester.net)

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# Executive Summary

It is now 21 months since everything was going to change.

As this report reveals - to nobody's surprise - very little has in fact changed.

Human systems have enormous inertia, and that is especially true in Manchester, where one political party, thanks in part to the first-past-the-post-system, has complete control of the Council and its scrutiny processes.

Beyond one party's control, there is a broader set of problems

- a) The narrative that only constant inward investment (by footloose capital) can solve Manchester's long-term problems
- b) A mutually-reinforcing network of same-thinking individuals, with the same rhetoric and buzzwords, will provide the thinking required for quite different challenges.
- c) A belief (with plenty of evidence to back it) among people that engaging with Manchester City Council personnel and processes is futile and demoralising

There are endless proclamations of virtue, of "science-based targets". The basic inconvenient truth - that a quarter of the city's carbon budget for the entire 21st century has been used up in the last two years alone - is simply ignored.

This report, following on from many previous reports by Climate Emergency Manchester covers the last three months (from January to April). It is based largely - but not entirely - on Freedom of Information Act requests. This is because Manchester City Council has shown itself to be extremely unwilling to be proactively transparent, a habit that continues despite protestations of change.

The report covers what the Council has not been doing - creating cycle lane infrastructure, procuring low-carbon asphalt, appointing a director to its Climate Change "Agency". It then looks at "progress" on the elements of the Climate Emergency Declaration.

In the past, Climate Emergency Manchester has made "recommendations". These have been ignored. So instead, we will merely highlight the following.

- No speeches have been given about climate change by "leaders"
- The Council's web communications on climate remain disastrous
- No carbon literacy training undertaken in a year, target pushed back five years.
- No actual *climate* action in wards (lots of litter-picking though)
- No discussions with GMCA/TfGM about decarbonising heat and transport

The one recommendation is that councillors who are not currently in charge take a long hard look at what Manchester City Council is doing in their name, and ask themselves if they are happy, if they are proud.

In a departure, this HDQ also covers what Climate Emergency Manchester has been doing, and what it intends to do in the coming months.

In a recent video we introduced ourselves. We closed with the following.

We know that climate change is scary, really scary.

We know that it's easy to bury your head in the sand. And sometimes that's healthy.

We know that local authorities are opaque and confusing.

We also know that taking action with other people is one of the best ways of coping with the feelings of dread.

We know that you have limited time. And we know that you're worried about being emotionally blackmailed.

If you say yes to one thing, you're worried about being emotionally blackmailed into doing more and more. We won't do that.

No matter who you are, if you care about local climate action, there are jobs that need doing.

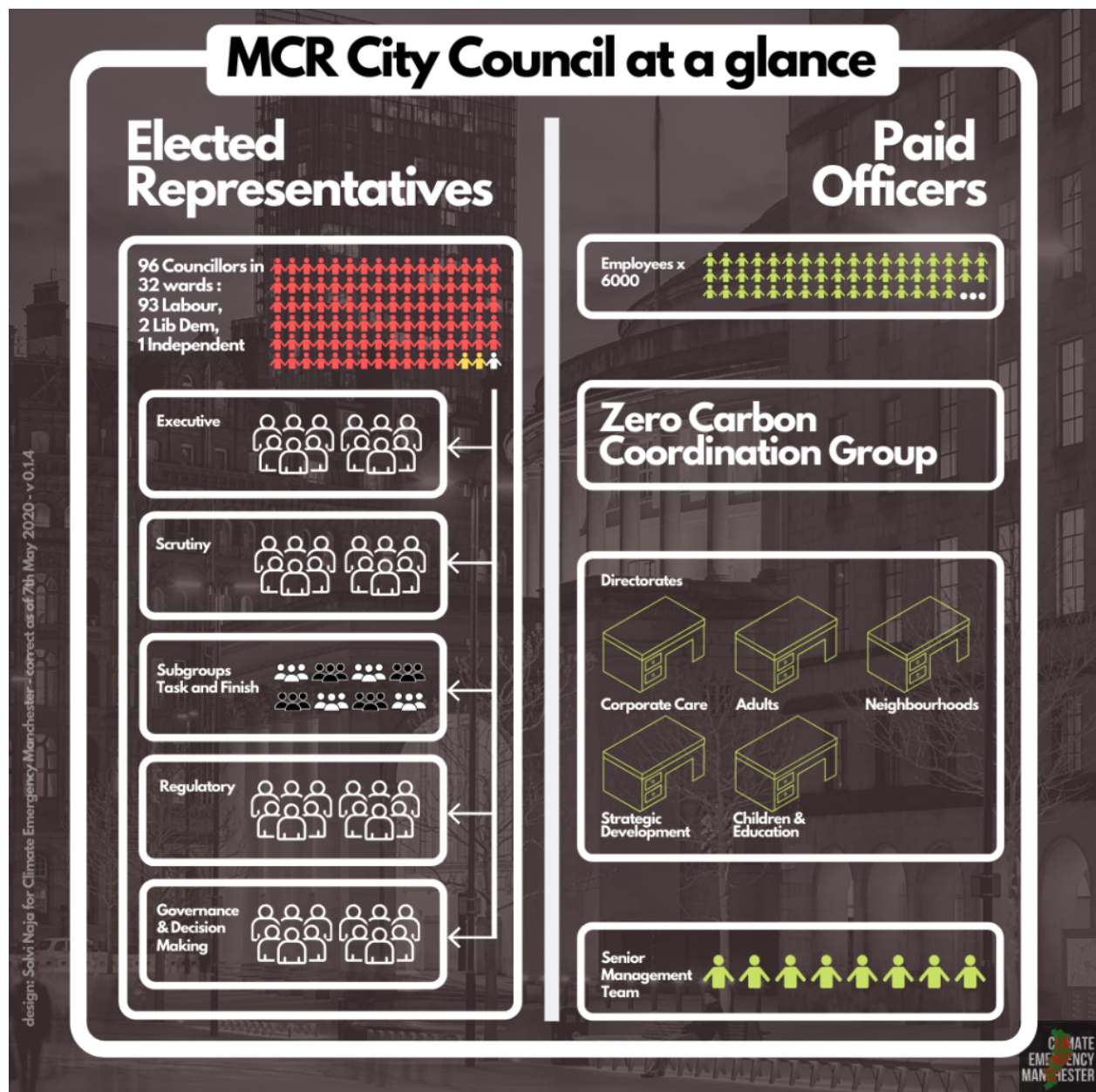
We'd love to hear from you.

If you want to get involved in what we do, our email is

[contact@climateemergencymanchester.net](mailto:contact@climateemergencymanchester.net)



# Manchester City Council - introductory comments

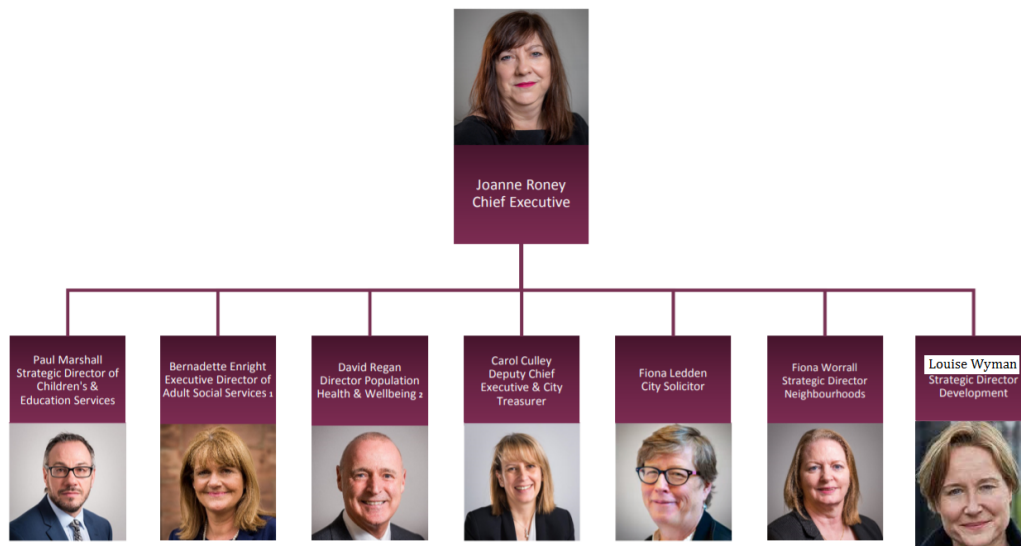


Manchester City Council has 96 councillors, spread over 32 wards (so, 3 councillors per ward). Each councillor has a 4 year term before being up for re-election.

At the moment there are 92 Labour Councillors, 2 Liberal Democrats (both in one ward) and 2 vacancies.

Of the elected members there are 10 who are members of the “Executive”. The leader of the Council, Richard Leese, has been leader since 1996.

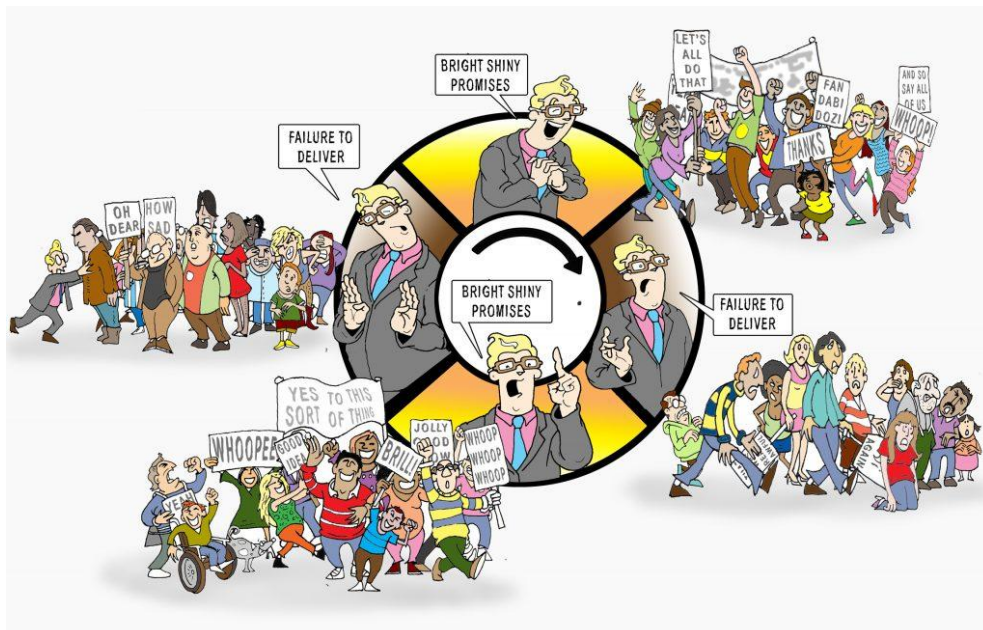
Alongside the elected councillors there are six thousand staff. There is a “Senior Management Team” that runs the show.



You can read more [here](#).

There are local elections happening on Thursday 6th May. Climate Emergency Manchester is running a hustings (election debate) on Monday 19th April.

There is a long history of promises that then don't get kept in Manchester. There is a cycle that we are stuck in - a kind of Groundhog Day where the leaders don't remember but (some of) the peasants do.



## January to March 2021

Besides making a fuss about some [new electric bin lorries that Biffa have bought](#), as part of their national roll-out, Manchester City Council has been somewhat quieter about the following.

### Anti-cycling measures



Spending £9 million quid on a "European boulevard" with no cycle lanes, having ignored the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee that had said the consultation had been terribly done (it had) and needed redoing.

The [£5.9 million Hyde Road widening](#) with - you guessed it - no cycle lanes. This is the one where [opposition to the scheme was classed as "neutral"](#) because, well, reasons.

Census Day is 21 March.  
Look out for more information in the post or visit [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk) to find out more.

### Not even considering asphalt procurement

In late March CEM saw [an article on the website transport-network.co.uk](#) that referred to an annual survey by the [Asphalt Industry Alliance](#). The article noted that *'Almost 80% of local authorities in England and Wales have declared a climate emergency yet only 23% of respondents confirmed that their authority has a quantified target to reduce the carbon footprint resulting from the procurement of road surfacing materials.'*

So we wrote to Manchester City Council and asked.

Does Manchester City Council have a quantified target to reduce the carbon footprint resulting from the procurement of road surfacing materials?

If yes, what is it/where can I find it?

If not, is anything planned?

After a nudge, we got the following very depressing “soon, soon” vague statement.

“At present, MCC Highways have not set a quantified target to reduce our carbon footprint from procuring road materials. However, we are currently working with some consultants to look at carbon led procurement for specific future projects. A carbon calculator has been chosen so that we can start to monitor our carbon emissions on Highways projects. Furthermore, Highways are currently reviewing their current material choices and in the process of pulling a revised list of sustainable materials that are to be considered.

MCC Highways have more control if environmental choices are considered up front as early as outline design. We will be working with the consultants in order to influence designs and set carbon reduction targets to our contractors, so we can hold them to account. Furthermore, we are working with suppliers to understand what alternative materials we can use that are more environmentally friendly. We recently had a meeting with Tarmac to learn about the benefits of recycled rubber asphalt and are hopefully looking to trial this on one of our future schemes.

This is only the beginning, and we are on a journey to make further improvements and contribute towards MCC's corporate ambition of being carbon neutral by 2038.”

“Only the beginning”. Twenty one months in. We thought this was a climate emergency? If ONLY the Executive Member for Environment would communicate better with the Executive Member for Transport.

## Car Park revenue.

We submitted a Freedom of Information Act request.

“Manchester City Council recently took car parks previously run by NCP back into public control. A previous FOIA asked for any evidence that the Council had had any discussions about whether climate emergency declarations and car park ownership/dependence on revenue were compatible. The answer was “no.” Is that still the case? As in, are any discussions about the compatibility of car park ownership/revenue streams and making “climate breakdown and the environment an integral part of activity throughout the Council, including all decision making” planned for this side of the apocalypse?”

Came the answer

“There have been no discussions which have taken place.”

“No discussions”. Twenty one months in. We thought this was a climate emergency? If ONLY the Executive Member for Environment would communicate better with the Executive Member for Transport.



## Direction-less. Sorry, *director*-less climate change “Agency”



Since 2015 Manchester City Council has spent roughly half a million pounds on a community interest company it set up and then changed the name of it to the impressive sounding “Manchester Climate Change Agency.” (Unlike a real agency, it is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Which

There is the occasional glossy pamphlet, a “workshop” (really just a lecture with a Q and A) and some bids for European or Lottery money that they then waste. There is an [annual “conference” \(lasting 90 minutes\) at which inconvenient news is buried deep/ignored and people are well, gaslit.](#)

Since late 2019 the Council has been saying it would soon appoint a director. The first lot of advertising (which included a national campaign) ended with

- a) Nobody being appointed
- b) That information having to be extracted

They tried again. They extended the deadline in order to get some decent candidates to shortlist.

They shortlisted. They interviewed. They said an announcement would be made.

It wasn't

So we asked “what's up”

And we were told

The Director role was offered to the preferred candidate and they were expected to start in the role in mid April. During the final stages of

pre-employment checks the candidate made the decision to decline the offer. A new process will now be developed to readvertise and fill the role.

Now these things do happen, but they also need to be seen in the context of

- a) Previous failure
- b) Previous reluctance to be honest about failure
- c) Repeated claims that Manchester is somehow the leading city in the UK on climate

On point c) - If it were, why is it so very hard to appoint anyone to be director of the “Agency”?

## Scrutiny rebranding

Finally, because of a petition campaign run by Climate Emergency Manchester, the Council has reshuffled the names and remits of its existing six scrutiny committees.

Let's compare the remits of the old "Neighbourhoods and Environment" scrutiny committee with the "new" "Environment and Climate Change" Scrutiny Committee.

# Spot the difference?

Old

New



We asked the following questions. Replies are indented.

1. Highways has been taken out (and given to Economy), but Street Management is still in. What, practically is the different between the two? Is it a question of Highways being about new build or major resurfacing and street management is potholes? Or is this an error, since Street Management is also listed under Economy?

1. Street Management should only be listed under the remit of Economy Scrutiny. Having it listed under the 2 committees was an oversight in the report submitted to both C&N and Council.

2. Similarly Planning has become "Planning policy and related enforcement". In layperson's terms, what is the difference? I've looked through the remits and no other committee has anything that looks like the gap between "Planning" and "Planning Policy and related enforcement", so am curious as to why the change in terminology.

2. [The presumption is] that the change is to provide clarity of precisely what area of Planning the Scrutiny Committee could look. Although I would caveat this to say that Scrutiny can not override the responsibility that the Planning Committee has for setting and agreeing planning policy as well as implementing planning enforcement.

3. Finally (!) what is the rationale for the creation of a separate item "Parks and Green Spaces", since that was covered in Environment (and is this to mean that Blue Infrastructure is looked at by another committee?!)

3. [T]o the best of my understanding, Blue and Green infrastructure is still to be scrutinised by the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee

Where does this leave us? With the problem of a too-packed agenda still a major problem. Without a dedicated climate scrutiny committee, the pre-eminent issue of the 21st century will still be competing for agenda space with pot-holes, streetlighting and dog turds.





## “Progress” on the Declaration

In July 2019 Manchester City Council declared a “Climate Emergency”, as many other cities in the UK had already done.

All 96 councillors voted for it, amid prolonged self-congratulation and boasts of transformation and urgency.

Climate Emergency Manchester has been keeping tabs on what has and has not been happening. Mostly what has not.

Here below are the latest findings. It is predictably grim reading, for the most part, with such progress as there is a side-effect of things the Council was already doing/is doing for other reasons.

### Speeches by elected leaders and the CEO.

1. Since December 1st 2020, how many speeches has Richard Leese given where the core topic of the speech was the climate emergency and its implications for Manchester (I.e. we are not interested in speeches where climate change is mentioned 'in passing'). When (dates) were these speeches given, to what audiences? Please provide the transcripts of speeches if they exist.. Please do NOT include occasions when the Leader was actually just moderating a panel.

A search has been conducted and no speeches have been identified by Cllr. Richard Leese.

2. Since December 1st 2020 how many speeches has Angeliki Stogia given where the core topic of the speech was the climate emergency and its implications for Manchester (I.e. we are not interested in speeches where climate change is mentioned 'in passing'). When (dates) were these speeches given, to what audiences? Please provide the transcripts of speeches if they exist..

There has been two speeches given by Cllr. Angeliki Stogia. These speeches are as follows; ( please note that no transcripts are yet available for the speeches listed below)

- Fri 29/01/2021 11:00 - 12:00 LGA Climate Emergency Workshop
- Wed 24/02/2021 15:30 - 16:00 Food Wave - Young People, Food & Climate Change Workshop

3. Since December 1st 2020, how many speeches has CEO Joanne Roney given where the core topic of the speech was the climate emergency and its implications for Manchester (I.e. we are not interested in speeches where climate change is mentioned 'in passing'). When (dates) were these speeches given, to what audiences? Please provide the transcripts of speeches if they exist..



A search has been conducted and no speeches have been identified by CEO Joanne Roney.

So, no speeches at all by the leader of the Council or the leader of the civil servants. Only two speeches, both to people who already are “sold” on the need for emergency action, by the Executive Member for Environment, Transport and Planning.

Why does this matter? Because people take their cues about what matters from elected leaders. “If they are not talking about an issue, it can’t be important.” There is solid evidence for this, under the label [“elite cues theory”](#).

And right now, unless you are already concerned, nothing about the behaviour of the city’s elected leaders, would have you thinking “hmm, climate change matters.”

In an emergency, real leaders explain what the problem is, what their solutions are, how people are needed to be “on board”. Really good real leaders ask for ideas from below, and figure out if those ideas are better.

Real leaders do that.

## A quarter of the 21st century carbon budget blown: what emergency action?

We asked

“An agreed amendment to the Climate Emergency Declaration of July 2019 called up on the Council to “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.” This did not happen, despite attempts to present other documents as if it had So, let's ask a slightly different question. **Given that a quarter of the city's carbon budget for the 21st century has been burnt through in the last two years alone, please provide details of meetings - since July 2020 - of meetings convened by, or attended by, council officers and elected members where a re-examination of the existing strategies to bring them up to scratch was the primary item on the agenda (by details we mean dates, attendance lists and minutes).** If no such meeting was held, does this mean that the Council is unconcerned by the blow-out of the carbon budget?” (emphasis added).

The answer-

A meeting took place on 25 March 2021 to discuss the plans for a new ‘Manchester Climate Change Framework 2.0’ for the city for the period 2022-25 which will be part funded by the URBACT Zero Carbon Cities project. The project team met to discuss the new framework and associated consultancy brief.

Attendees at the meeting were:

Manchester Climate Change Agency – Jonny Sadler, Lisa Lingard, Ellie Bradley, Paul O'Hare (MMU) xxxxxx (student).  
Manchester City Council – David Houlston, Samantha Nicholson, Patricia Allen, Adrian Slatcher.  
GMCA – Todd Holden.

So, two things to note here.

**Firstly**, there has not been a single “*oh hell, what do we do??*” meetings since last July, when it was blithely and secretively announced that a quarter of the city’s carbon budget for the entire 21st century had been blown in just two years. Not a single one.

**Secondly**, the process of (yet again) rebranding and recycling the previous “plan” is underway, with the fiction that the Agency and the Council are somehow different entities being preserved. No members of the climate change “partnership” nor broader society in attendance. And how do we think this will end?

## Wards

In the report to NESC in February 2021, great play was made of the fact that "over 300 people" had engaged in face to face meetings. That's about 10 people per ward, and there will be many wards where NOTHING has been done.

1. Please provide details of activity by Council offices around engaging with residents and partners who want to be actively involved, since April 2020, in the following wards - Crumpsall, Gorton, Ardwick, Sharston and Harpurhey.

[See Appendix One of this report]

So, what is going on here is the Council’s favoured “pufferfish” strategy, where they include things that have already been happening, and things that are only very tangentially related to climate emergency action. The original text of the climate emergency declaration was

*“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.”*

Litter picking is not climate emergency action. It is worth doing, of course, but it is not climate emergency action.

2. In your reply to a previous FOIA you assured us "Additional officers to work on climate change activities will be recruited in coming year. " How many have been recruited/moved from other jobs to do this in the last three months?

Two Climate Change Neighbourhood Officers have been recruited and started working in the North and Central Neighbourhood Teams in March. The vacancy in the South Team has been re-advertised.

3. In January 2021 in response to a FOIA we were told "City Centre (Deansgate and Piccadilly wards): City Centre Climate Change Plan This plan was produced following a public event in March 2020 and some further consultation with residents. The document attached is still a draft version and will be developed further to ensure that actions are SMART." Please provide a copy of the most recent (final?) draft. Who developed the work further? How?

Following feedback from residents, the final version of City Centre Climate Change Plan was produced by the Neighbourhood Manager and approved by the six elected members in the city centre wards. The document is attached.

The Neighbourhood Manager is currently engaging with relevant officers and partners to finalise the Action Plan.

Website \*still\* looking for a refresh.

If this were considered a climate emergency by Manchester City Council, they would have clear and highly visible material on their website. They never have done this. So we wrote (another) FOIA...

It is still the case (March 3 2021) that if you search on Manchester City Council's website with "climate emergency" you get "nothing found" -

[https://www.manchester.gov.uk/site/scripts/google\\_results.php?q=%22climate+emergency%22](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/site/scripts/google_results.php?q=%22climate+emergency%22)

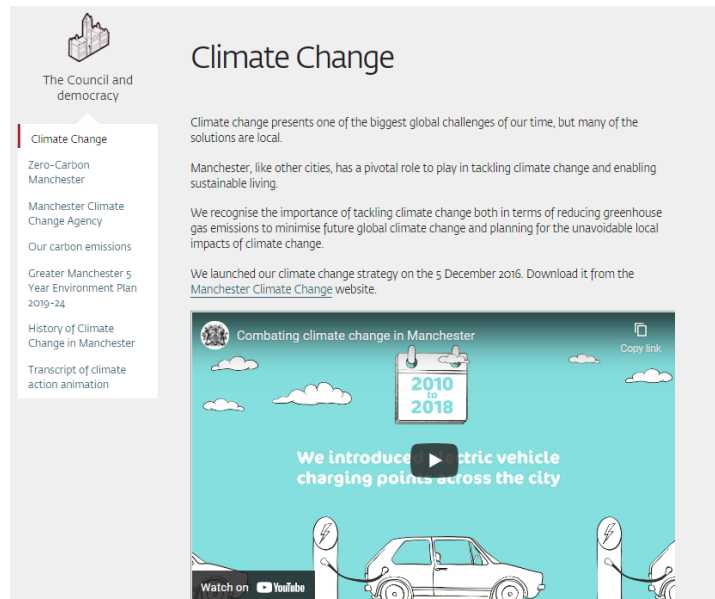
It is still the case that without quote marks, you are directed to a climate change page which seems to have been last updated in 2016. What work has been done to create pages on the City Council's website to provide at the very least the text of the July 10 declaration 2019 and links to organisations in Manchester trying to take action? And please don't tell us about manchesterclimate.com we know about that site.

Information on the climate emergency declared in July 2019 can be found on the following pages of the council's website:

[https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/500002/council\\_policies\\_and\\_strategies/3833/climate\\_change/2](https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/500002/council_policies_and_strategies/3833/climate_change/2).

Work is underway with our Communications Team to refresh the Climate Change pages on our website to make sure the information is relevant and up to date.

So, our question about what work has been done is ignored. The top page on the website when you put in climate change STILL doesn't mention the climate emergency declaration.



## Council's "Sustainable Travel Policy"

Still not happening, despite previous assurances.

In reply to a previous FOIA you told us that *"HROD staff responsible for reward and recognition were redeployed from March to work on Covid response activities. The team has now been bought back together and are reviewing the total reward package for staff to incorporate more sustainable travel options which will be launched during 2021/22."*

Great! When will the review of the total reward package be complete? When will it be launched?

Due to significant work pressures on the HROD team resulting from Covid and budget pressure response, work on the total reward package and a travel policy for staff has been paused. Interviews for a Senior Project Officer to coordinate this work will take place later this month and a revised timetable for implementing this work agreed during objective setting for the successful applicant.

So, the question isn't answered. But somebody may be appointed (though if we remember what happened to the Director of the Climate "Agency", who knows...

Will there be a dashboard of flights taken? No

Given that FOIAs are expensive, and given that activists will almost certainly keep FOIAing about the Council's air journeys, will the Council be creating an online database of flights its members and officers take on Council business that is updated on a regular (weekly or monthly) basis? If not, why not?

No, the Council is not planning develop an online data base of flights booked by Council officers or elected members. Reporting on emissions from air travel is currently included as part of the Council's reporting against the Climate Change Action Plan.

### Good news - no flights!

Please provide a list of all flights - dates and destinations - taken by any elected member and staff for the period between the 29th November 2020 and the present For flights taken by elected members and members of the Strategic Management Team, please also provide the name(s) of the individuals flying and the class they flew (business, economy, steerage).

No flights have been taken between the period of 29th November 2020 and present.

### Local Plan

When will the next stages of the Local Plan take place? Is the Council planning any speeding up, or has the finalisation date been pushed back a year?

Consultation will start later this year and adoption will not be before Spring 2023

### Zero Carbon Coordination Group

Please provide copies of minutes/action tracking/slide decks etc for all meetings of the Zero Carbon Coordination Group from November 2020 to the present.

As requested, please find attached documents from the Zero Carbon Coordination Group from November 2020 to the date of your correspondence. Please note that the slides are used to inform and aid discussion at the Zero Carbon Coordination Group meetings and as such they include proposals that may not have been formally agreed.

Is it still the case that there are no plans to publish these online as a matter of routine?

There are no plans to publish documents from the Zero Carbon Coordination Group on the website as a matter of routine as they are not designed to be public facing documents. The agendas for the Zero Carbon Coordination Group focus on updates on delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan, which are reported as part of the quarterly and annual reporting cycle agreed by the Zero Carbon Coordination Group. Quarterly and annual reports will be published on the Council's website going forward, as part of the refresh of the climate change pages.

But, given how disastrous the Council's website is, it will be impossible to find them. And they won't be up-to-date.

NB We will post the minutes/slides of the ZCCG on the CEM website in due course.

## Carbon Literacy

In 2009 the "Manchester Climate Change Action Plan" boasted that everyone who lived, worked or studied in Manchester (roughly a million people) would have received a day's carbon literacy training by ...2013. The actual number was roughly 3 thousand (maybe less). Councillors have been saying they would get "carbon literate" for almost a decade now. Never happens. The Climate Emergency Declaration of July 2019 has the following commitment.

"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."

And what has happened? The deadline has been quietly pushed back to 2025. No explanation given. Meanwhile, in December when we asked for a list of carbon literate councillors, we were told "nope, confidentiality." So, in the wording below, we chose to be a bit more, well, robust.

Please provide the names of all councillors are currently fully carbon literate. You have given this information previously, and if you refuse to do so (as you did in December), well, we will ask for an internal review. And if that doesn't go according to plan, we will go to the information commissioner. Messy, time consuming, embarrassing etc.

The names of Cllrs who are fully Carbon literate are listed below:

Rabnawaz Akbar Ahmed Ali Azra Ali Shaukat Ali Zahra Alijah Paul Andrews Rosa Battle Sandra Collins Bev Craig Yasmine Dar Joan Davies Jade Doswell John Flanagan Carmine Grimshaw John Hacking Naeem Hassan John Hughes	Lee-Ann Igbon William Jeavons Afia Kamal Veronica Kirkpatrick Shelley Lanchbury John Leech Richard Leese Jill Lovecy Sam Lynch Joanna Midgley Mary Monaghan Nigel Murphy Eddy Newman Dzidra Noor Bernard Priest Dave Rawson	Fiaz Riasat Suzanne Richards Emily Rowles Paula Sadler Basat Sheikh Mandie Shilton Godwin Andrew Simcock Angeliki Stogia Bernard Stone Matt Strong Emma Taylor Mary Watson Chris Wills James Wilson Annette Wright
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**Carbon literacy training was suspended in March 2020 due to the impact of COVID. No training has been offered to Councillors since that time. This is a correction to the information shared in the response to FOI/3959 which stated that 5 Councillors had received training in March 2020 - it is now apparent that this training was cancelled. It is intended to resume the training offer for Councillors in the near future.**

The Council does not hold information of Carbon literacy training which Councillors may have undertaken through employment or other roles they hold outside the organisation.

And again, that hardy perennial - "Is it still the case that, despite it being suggested repeatedly, and it being one way to a) save money and b) create trust, there is no plan to have an online register of which councillors have completed their training?"

Yes, there are currently no plans to have an online register.

## Not working with the Tyndall Centre

In response to a previous FOIA about element 9 of the Climate Emergency Declaration ("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.") you informed us that "The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research presented their interim findings to the 23 January 2020 Climate Change Sub Group and the presentation can be found at the link below. <https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/documents/s14342/2%20Manchester%20Aviation%20Preliminary%20Findings.pdf>" but that they were not being funded to undertake any further work. The words "interim" and "preliminary" suggest that there is, well, unfinished business? Are there any plans by Manchester Council to fund Tyndall (or anyone else) to turn interim/preliminary into "final"? If so, when, to whom? Or are we misunderstanding something?

The Council are not currently planning any further commissions with the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research or another third party to look into aviation emissions. The reason the findings were preliminary is because they were being presented to the Climate Change Sub Group for their input. The final report is Appendix 1 of the Manchester Climate Change Framework, which can be found online here: [https://www.manchesterclimate.com/sites/default/files/Manchester%20Aviation%20Emissions\\_Review%202020.pdf](https://www.manchesterclimate.com/sites/default/files/Manchester%20Aviation%20Emissions_Review%202020.pdf)

If you cared about the city's "science-based carbon budget" being spectacularly blown, you might go back to the people who came up with it and say "any bright ideas?"  
If.

## Corporate Plan

You replied to a previous FOIA stating "A further review of the Corporate Plan is scheduled to take place in January 2021, to align with the Council's Budget and Business Planning processes for 2021/22". Did this review take place? Could you please provide a copy? A search of the council's website has come up empty, and no item came to Executive in January or February under that heading.

We are pleased to confirm that a further review of the Corporate Plan was conducted in January 2021. This was aligned with the Council's Budget and Business Planning processes for 2021/22 and as such was included in the pack of papers for these Agenda items that went to Executive on 17th February 2021, Budget Overview and Strategy for 21/22, section 4 of the report: Corporate Plan. Link attached for your convenience: <https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/documents/s23018/Budget%20Overview%20and%20Section%2025%20Report.pdf>

Well, that's a relief. Good that it was so easy for concerned citizens to find, too.

## Zero Carbon Skills Group

'In response to a previous FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) you kindly informed us that "The 'Skills for a Zero Carbon Economy' group was established and met on 2 March 2020, however, this work has not been progressed any further due to the major capacity issues resulting from the Council's response to COVID-19." Has work restarted? If so, please provide the latest two sets of minutes/presentations/action tracking. If not, when is it scheduled to restart?'

The Skills for a Zero Carbon Economy Group now known as the Zero Carbon Skills Group was reconvened in the summer of 2020 and met in October 2020. Membership consists of the Council, GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority), Manchester Climate Change Agency (MCCA), Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), The Manchester College (TMC), The Growth Company and the Central Manchester Foundation Trust (Hospital).

Meetings did not take place between April – June 2020 as resources within the team – and those of our partners were focused on Covid-19 response plans and in the case of the Council, on delivering the Council's Emergency Food Response programme and processing Discretionary Business Grants across the city.

Key recent actions are detailed below:

- The Work and Skills Team is developing a skills framework which breaks down anticipated skills demands by sector. Along with the partners, developing some SMART actions over the summer, particularly in relation to retrofit.
- We commissioned the Centre for Local Economic Studies (CLES) to produce a review of the current post-16 training and education landscape relating to skills for a



zero-carbon economy. The first commission in 2019 was a desktop exercise and CLES were recommissioned by the Zero Carbon Skills Group in December 2020 to build on the initial research with the support of from Manchester University and MMU's Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Innovation Centre. This is intended to be a useful resource for training providers, education institutions and students who are considering a career in zero carbon roles.

- The group is examining the potential of a growing green skills demand in line with Manchester's Net Zero targets and a cross-industry drive to decarbonise the city through a review of the retrofit pipeline, set to create new roles and embed upskilling and reskilling of the existing workforce to deliver the zero-carbon agenda. This includes commercial development (construction) pipelines as well as the retrofitting of Manchester's social housing stock. This will be in conjunction with GMCA.
- The group is working to identify and oversee opportunities to embed environmental activity and zero carbon skills development into social value projects as part of major developments across the city, e.g. Town Hall refurbishment and decarbonisation of the Civic Quarter; and Northern Gateway.

Green Skills and work with Schools and Colleges

- Following a Green Skills meeting with the Careers Network (careers leads in Manchester secondary schools), in 2019, discussions were held with One Manchester's "Get Your Future Started" staff. They then adapted their programme to produce a "Get Your Green Future Started" version and presented the offer to the March 2020 careers network meeting. Manchester schools expressed an interest in having the programme in their schools, but lockdown has meant that this was delayed. One Manchester have been invited to the next careers network meeting to relaunch the programme.
- Groundwork have been engaged to discuss research and scope out the production of a resource focused on green skills in the workforce/green careers.
- 10 Voluntary Community Sector Organisations (VCSO) engaged to review the sustainability agenda including a call to action regarding young people and green skills, linking to employers. The partnership will form a network to meet regularly to identify and progress actions.
- Skills for Life produced a Green Planet Skills for Life pack to link the key skills required to deliver on our zero carbon ambitions in schools.

This is potentially interesting, if you can wade through the "pufferfish" tactics, blarney and old info (always important in submitting a FOIA to set a time limit so they don't bombard you with out of date info). There appears to have been no meeting of the group since October. Also, the minutes we asked for were not included

## Talking with GMCA/TfGM

1. Please provide copies of any correspondence between the Executive Member for the Environment with GMCA/TfGM about decarbonising public transport that were sent after December

1st 2020 to the present, and the reply/ies from GMCA/TfGM. Fingers crossed that this time there IS some correspondence.

There is no correspondence between the Executive Member for the Environment with GMCA/TFGM regarding decarbonising public transport during this period.

2. Please provide copies of any correspondence between the Executive Member for the Environment with GMCA/ about decarbonising heat that were sent after December 1st 2020 to the present, and any reply from GMCA. Fingers crossed that this time there IS some correspondence.

There is no correspondence between the Executive Member for the environment with GMCA regarding decarbonising heat during this period.

3. Since, December 1st 2020 what representations has Manchester City Council made to GMCA about decarbonised energy?. Who made the representations, when how. What response, if any, has been received..

Manchester City Council is in regular correspondence with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the subject of decarbonised energy is discussed at the following meetings.

- Greater Manchester Climate Emergency/5 year Plan Liaison (Mark Duncan)
- Decarbonisation of Public Estate (Richard Munns, Mark Duncan)
- Green City Board (Cllr. Angeliki Stogia)
- Green City Region Partnership (Cllr. Angeliki Stogia)
- Buildings and Energy challenge group
- Wider Leadership Team (Joanne Roney)
- Directors of Place (Louise Wyman)
- Chief Executives Investment Group (Joanne Roney)
- Various meetings to discuss Manchester City Council's involvement in the Greater Manchester Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme bid
- Greater Manchester Transport Committee ( Cllr. Angeliki Stogia)

A recent outcome from these discussions has been the awarding of £19.1 million to the Council to decarbonise heat in 11 Council owned buildings. The grant came from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and the Council was part of a Greater Manchester consortium which secured £78 million in grant.

## Talking to the Government

1a) Since December 1st 2020 to the present, what representations has Manchester City Council made to HMG about providing powers and resources to make the zero-carbon target possible including funding for big capital projects? Please see below. 1b) Who made the representations, when, how? What response, if any, has been received? (please provide copies of all correspondence)

Please see below.

2a) Since December 1st 2020 to the present,, what representations has Manchester City Council made to HMG about accelerating the reduction of carbon emissions from aviation?

There have been no specific direct representations on this issue. Manchester Airport Group joined the Manchester Climate Change Partnership in January 2021 and are member of the Government's Jet Zero programme.

2b) Who made the representations, when, how. What response, if any, has been received? (please provide copies of all correspondence)

N/A

3a) Since December 1st 2020 to the present,, what representations has Manchester City Council made to HMG about accelerating the decarbonisation of the electricity grid, funding low carbon energy generation?

Please see below.

3b) Who made the representations, when, how. What response, if any, has been received? (please provide copies of all correspondence)

Please see below.

4a) Since December 1st 2020, what representations has Manchester City Council made to HMG about ensuring that the UK prosperity fund focuses on enabling the transition to a low carbon economy?

Please see below.

4b) Who made the representations, when, how. What response, if any, has been received? (please provide copies of all correspondence)

Please see below.

Senior officers at Manchester City Council contacted a number of senior Civil Servants in late December 2020 regarding the Manchester Economic Recovery and Investment Plan which contains a number of projects which are relevant to this request including zero carbon housing retrofit and energy generation. Copies of letters which are relevant to this request for information are attached to this response. Follow up meetings took place between January and March as per the table below.

Department	Government Attendees	Council Attendees	Relevance to this request
HM Treasury	Tom Wiperman, Thea Goodsell	Carol Culley, Louise Wyman, Pat Bartoli, David Houliston	UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Budget 2021. Housing retrofit.
Cities & Local Growth Unit	Muryam Anwar, Jesse Garick, Leila Mottahedeh	James Binks, Pat Bartoli, David Houliston, Mark Duncan, Elizabeth Mitchell	Housing retrofit. New Smithfield Market & hydrogen fleet. Large Scale Energy Generation.
MHCLG	Jeremy Pocklington, Muryam Anwar	Joanne Roney, David Houliston	Housing retrofit.

Here the Council has gotten lucky. Because the lobbying they have been doing for post-COVID recovery funds has included the magic phrases “low carbon economy” and so on, they are able to give an answer to this question that looks relatively impressive. Of course, what was needed was

## What next?

Over the coming months Manchester City Council will continue to claim all is well with its own emissions reductions (which are 2% of the city’s total), ignoring the huge influence of austerity to their “reductions.”.

They will continue to dodge the question of who should be ensuring that the other 98% of the city’s emissions. They will hide behind language about “partnership”.

They will try to use the Glasgow climate conference in November, which has all the indications of being an omnishambles, to say “Manchester is wonderful”.

# Climate Emergency Manchester

We [stopped being aimless in February](#)! Yay us!

## **AIM 1 Thriving**

"For us to thrive as active citizens (in a broader ecosystem of resistance that includes close supporters, allies and interested by-standers). That is, we as CEM sustain ourselves and support each other, to grow in numbers, in skills, in relationships, and to ensure the conditions under which we as individuals within the group, the group as a whole, and its allies can continue to thrive."



## **AIM 2 What we do with the thriving**

"To use the power that this thriving gives us (skills, knowledge, connections, credibility etc) to put consistent and substantial pressure on Manchester City Council and other local centres of political, economic and cultural influence, so that Manchester's responses to climate change are rapid, radical and do not harm the poorest and marginalised in society."



## In the last three months

CEM's main *outward* focus was the culmination of our campaign for a seventh scrutiny committee.

On Tuesday 9th February core group member Chloe Jeffries spoke at the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee about the need for better scrutiny (and a seventh committee) The wall we met was "yes, scrutiny of climate needs to be better, but let's rebrand the existing system" - the kind of claggy cloying consensus that would be demoralising if we had not already priced in this Council's behaviour to our calculations.

On Wednesday 31st March, this feeble rebranding was waved through full Council. And here we are.

CEM's *inward* focus has been on agreeing the aims (see above), getting better at our internal processes around decision making, holding our business meetings, strategising. Top tips we would send back in time to our younger selves include

- a) Growing our individual/collective strategising muscles via each of us, in turn, chairing the fortnightly business meeting and doing a backcasting-from-three-months-hence
- b) Videos will properly boost yer morale.

We have also redone a group assessment exercise we last did in about July last year (i.e. a million years ago). We figured out that we have some absolute gaps (i.e. none of us in the core group has the relevant skills/knowledge at the "right" level - in this case "expert").

- Allyship
- Convening groups
- Enabling "legitimate peripheral participation"
- Feedback taking
- Information management
- Meetings - online - business/internal meeting
- Meetings - online - public - advertising and preparing
- Understanding Ableism
- Understanding class (UK)
- Understanding intersectionality
- Understanding Patriarchy
- Understanding privilege (white, male, CLASS, ableist etc)
- Understanding White supremacy
- Volunteer management
- Accountability (minimising 'lunching out')

We also identified a bunch of single points of failure, where only one of us is "up to the right level" (so, if that person leaves/is a cop, the group is in trouble). These are

- Coping with disruptors and disruption
- Inter-group dynamics in social movements
- Introducing new members to an existing group

- Morale maintenance (collective)
- Morale maintenance (individual)
- Post-mortems and evaluation
- Problem solving skills
- Strategising (includes scenario building)
- Understanding motivations to participate in social movement organisations, and how they shift
- Understanding power within social movement organisations

We are going to do the best we can, working with others, to close those gaps.

## In the next three months

We intend to

engage closely and constructively with all the newly elected/re-elected councillors

- Engage closely and constructively with the six scrutiny committees
- Build the capacity of other individuals and groups to do the above
- Bring out a fantastic student climate handbook (see below)
- Have fun. Have a lot of fun.
- Learn some new skills/improve existing skills, gain some new knowledge/deepen existing knowledge, maintain existing relationships/create new relationships.

## The Core Group

But let's pull back and look at who the core group is. Unlike other groups which have a more "open" system (anyone can turn up and start making consequential decisions that they won't necessarily be around to try to implement) we in CEM have opted for an invite-only and "this-stuff-requires-actual-long-term-commitment" approach.

From July 2019 we have had four core members - Calum, Marc, Chloe and Marion. We briefly had a fifth, but he was replaced with Adam in February 2020. We were joined briefly by Pooja Kishnani in July 2021. However, her university workload and Marc's dad jokes caused her to pull back from core group membership. Fortunately, we were joined in December 2020 by Robbie Watt.

Here are some self-interviews, conducted for a "two year celebration" document that, um, didn't get released...

### Adam



**Why did you get involved?** I got involved because after having a decade professional experience consulting in the 'corporate sustainability' sector started to feel increasingly inadequate as my sole response to climate change and I

needed to take more interest in my local area to effecting change. I was burning with rage from the successive failures to take more action on climate after following what the IPCC had reported in late 2018 as well as seeing what was going on with XR and wanted to channel all those emotions into something. I was following what CEM was doing and it seemed to appeal to me.

### **Why have you stayed involved?**

It's helped to keep me sane and provide some focus when I had a fair amount of free time at the start of last year, build my confidence and skills up in areas which are completely new to me around being an 'activist' and widen my local network. I think most importantly is that I feel supported by my fellow core group members (albeit virtually at the moment) and we've managed to create a really interesting space that is trying and I think managing to do things a little differently.

### **In the last year what's the thing that you think that cem has done internally that has mattered most?**

Internally, I think it's been trying to have fairly honest conversations with each other about how we're coping (or not), what motivates / demotivates and how we can push through these things to focus on outputs not outcomes.

### **And externally what has mattered most?**

Continuing to push the council via our petition for greater climate scrutiny and using that effectively with a great speaking slot at the resources committee to change the leader of the council's position on whether to have a dedicated scrutiny committee.

### **What are the big challenges for CEM coming up in the next six months, with regard to**

#### **a) Its internal operations**

Keeping a balance between admin and action so that we're not inadvertently demoralising others in the group as well as a wider balance with other demands on our time from our lives outside of CEM. As a core group of 6-7 part-timers we are always very ambitious, which is good for a group of activists but also means we fall short of our expectations, which erodes morale.

#### **b) Its engagement with supporters**

I think getting into a habit of going a little further in the details or thinking around some of our outputs when we ask our supporters to do some sort of action off the back of something we've done. A lot of our engagement is going to be based on a percentage of supporters being 'in the right place at the right time' that can help amplify the things we are doing – ranging from something simple for a wide audience to maybe something more in depth and specific for supporters we know have more experience or a set of skills they're offering.

#### **c) The Council**



Following the local elections taking stock of whether anything has materially changed in their approach to climate change or if they've taken what we've been pushing for over the past 12 months or so and completely deformed it to fit their 'business as usual' perspective. If they do the latter I'm pretty sure they'll try to gaslight everyone with another glossy PR campaign to paint it all as a success, whilst conveniently ignoring the rapidly shrinking carbon budget.

Calum



**Why did you get involved?**

I got on with Marc and it seemed a) interesting b) something I'd never done before c) I needed some outlet for trying to help, even in a small way, to make the world marginally less awful

**Why have you *stayed* involved?**

Points a, b and c (particularly a and c) remain in effect, also have got to meet lots of other cool people and be (somewhat) involved in some remarkable things

**In the last year what's the thing that you think that cem has done *internally* that has mattered most**

The ability to have a mature conversation amongst ourselves (via the vehicle of the Prospectus) about what we want CEM to be and do in the future

Actively and selectively recruit new members successfully

**and *externally* what has mattered most?**

The cumulative effect of CEM managing find ways to

- stay effective and coherent during the initial lockdown,
- get together ways of working while we couldn't meet up,
- Recruit a "Taskforce" of talented and committed people,
- find creative ways to keep the petition visible and collect signatures in creative ways both online and while maintaining social distancing
- Have sufficient social capital to be able to mobilise support, to press MCC councillors (via briefing note etc) to consider changing their scrutiny arrangements, and to be able to shape those eg remit of the committee

Altogether, this is a level of resilience and effectiveness that shows CEM is serious about what it does

**What are you proudest of?**

Being a part of a group that is still standing after 2020, that has the level of emotional intelligence that CEM has demonstrated

**What are the big challenges for CEM coming up In the next six months, with regard to**

### **a) Its internal operations**

How to expand the core group given that we now have a history, in-jokes, etc etc, (which are parts of the culture of the group that should not be casually discarded) whilst making new members feel welcome

### **b) Its engagement with supporters**

As numbers of supporters willing to engage with specific tasks (hopefully) grows, we need a structured, effective way of managing this so that people feel their efforts are valued, they can increase or decrease their involvement as they need to, but the overall still job gets done without cooking the CG member(s) who is (are) coordinating it

### **c) The Council**

MCC has a significant opportunity (as they did after declaring a “Climate Emergency” in 2019) to brush off further pressure / criticism by pointing to the fact that they have given us “what we want” and we should leave them to get on with it. They cannot be allowed to make this stick...

Chloe

#### **Why did you get involved?**

I was invited by a friend whose thinking I liked and by someone he'd recently met and rated highly. I think I am officially member #3 (in order of joining) and my membership of that early core was built on pre-existing trust, respect and interpersonal relations. It's always nice to be asked, to feel chosen and I am someone more inclined to say yes than no. But the offer to join CEM also came at a perfect time to secure that 'yes' from me. I'd been involved in various initiatives over the years (from coops to trade unions) but not yet got stuck into anything of that nature since moving to Manchester. Thinking and reading no longer felt a sufficient way to deal with news of the deepening climate crisis. The nagging thought that I should do more became a gnawing one.



#### **Why have you *stayed* involved?**

Things took off! Perhaps more so than I had anticipated. It was not that there were measurable 'wins' in the first months (or that we'd even set things up to be that way), but I could see developments in the right direction. Interesting people got in touch, got involved. We received appreciative feedback for what we were trying to achieve at a few early workshops. There seemed a need for what we were doing, in this place, at this moment in time. I felt I was developing new skills and learning more about the city.

#### **In the last year what's the thing that you think that cem has done *internally* that has mattered most**

For me, something changed around February 2020 (pre-pandemic, so I won't attribute it just to that). Maybe it was cumulative; seeds we had sown began to germinate. But I also think we took an important decision to invite Adam to join the core group. It was relatively speedy, but we'd all been impressed by the contributions he'd made as a supporter. I'm so pleased that we did not

delay. Five full core members suddenly seemed a critical mass and began to lead to a better division of labour (assign individuals to specific tasks and projects, rather than everyone on everything). But the impact was more than just a boost to numbers. The skills Adam brought were invaluable. Yes, he had a huge amount of knowledge from his previous work, but what I appreciated even more was the refreshing pragmatism and a good instinct for the feasible (that has spawned its own protocol!) Also: we now had a ready source of beer.

### **and externally what has mattered most?**

It has to be the decision (not taken lightly) to launch a petition for a scrutiny committee. This matters most because it was a visible outward-facing campaign, with a concrete goal and clear ways for others to get involved. We had an obvious ask for any resident of Manchester: sign. Success required us to work more closely with supporters, raise our profile with all kinds of groups and boost our media presence. Maybe the challenge now is what happens after that campaign, both in terms of communicating the next steps around scrutiny of climate (what we are asking for may not seem so clear) but also explaining what we do *beyond* campaigning for a committee. Some people only associate us with that! There's heaps more to CEM (most obviously the handbook, more subtly the reflective pieces we have penned on emotions). What is the best way to bring new projects to the fore while maintaining the work that has engaged and energised so many supporters to date?

### **What are you proudest of?**

I'm proud of a lot of what we have done and am a big advocate of celebrations, ways to mark and enjoy pride (I also just miss parties). But it's sometimes quite hard to spot those moments, when you are in the throes of a project. So I usually remember to be proud when I receive a nice message or a thank you from a supporter. Relatedly, I get a lot of satisfaction from helping other people, even if only on a small task or in an incremental way. There's a lot of 1:1, micro, small-scale work that I am proud of over the past two years and for me that is part of what it means to be in CEM. But it's not going to make its way into an MEN article or even a blog post.

### **What are the big challenges for CEM coming up in the next six months, with regard to**

#### **a) Its internal operations**

We need to make sure that we can keep going. I'd probably prioritise healthy group functioning (and existing!) over the pace of activity, if necessary. If we have to drop the output a little to ensure we all still get along and enjoy ourselves, I'd be happy to make that trade off.

The very fact that we're writing a two year blog is something. We've passed a couple of the key points at which groups typically crumble or fold. But we are still dependent on a small bunch of individuals, and relatively short-term 'surges'. We're aware of single points of failure, but need to do more to close them. Time will always be an issue and no future plans should be premised on a fantasy scenario where the whole core group has acres more capacity, simultaneously (individuals peak and trough at different points). Are our internal operations such that, hypothetically, we could still be around 2 more years down the line? What about in a decade? That's not the aim. I'm told nothing lasts forever. But it's an interesting thought experiment

#### **b) Its engagement with supporters**

Deepening and broadening engagement with supporters is probably the number one thing I am

interested in over the next year. Deepening means continuing to work with those who have supported us thus far, involving them beyond a single campaign and in a way that is meaningful for them, extending their skills. Broadening means widening that group of supporters, in every sense imaginable. Our supporters are utterly fantastic but at present they do, inevitably, look a bit like us.

### **c) The Council**

There's lots that hasn't and won't change with the Council. I'm clear-eyed about that. But I do think we are entering a slightly new phase in terms of our relationship with 'them' and how we frame what we are trying to achieve. There's a danger that we are seen by some to have had our little campaign, said our piece, maybe had some success with it... but now that we have been 'listened to' we should be quiet for a while and let other people get on with it. That's missing the point. We're not after one tweak or quick-ish fix. The rhetoric-reality gap is not showing any signs of closing. But nor should we play too readily into the hands of those who want to portray us as 'never satisfied' or 'endlessly negative'.

Other challenges pertinent to the next 6 months involve working with incoming councillors and a new executive member. But I see those as slightly lesser challenges. If you are planning to be around for a long time (as we are!) you have to treat elections and maybe even individual personalities as flotsam and jetsam. Otherwise, you'd get knocked off course all the time as election fever or some storm-in-a-teacup scandal takes grip!

Marc

#### **Why did you get involved?**

It's a lonely old business fighting City Hall on climate change. Everyone who cares seems wanting to either change the system from within (never works) or run off to the capitol to have a sleep-out and call it the revolution (never works). I didn't want the council to be able to get away with what it always has in the past - making some big eye-catching promises and then simply not deliver.



#### **Why have you *stayed* involved?**

That has shifted over time, and there have been a couple of times I've seriously contemplated downing tools, retreating into the comfort zone of Manchester Climate Monthly, as my bolt hole. I am very very grateful that I didn't do that. The thing that has kept me in is CEM's external effectiveness (albeit modest) and its growing internal culture. Watching the team come together, watching people grow in knowledge and skills (and hopefully contributing to that) is a little bit addictive.

#### **In the last year what's the thing that you think that CEMhas done *internally* that has mattered most**

Worked at how we work together, how we co-ordinate. We invested a lot of time in that, and it has paid off. It takes ages to build trust, to build capacity.

### **and *externally* what has mattered most?**

We showed that local climate activism was possible in a pandemic. While other groups had a low profile or imploded, we kept going, kept finding new and meaningful things for people to do.

### **What are you proudest of?**

There is SO MUCH. Our efforts at emotional literacy. That we are still here? That we have strategic and tactical objectives which are achievable, and we are developing our capacities and those of our supporters

### **What are the big challenges for CEM coming up in the next six months, with regard to**

#### **a) Its internal operations**

Being realistic about time commitments, spreading the skills, knowledge and relationships

#### **b) Its engagement with supporters**

making it both easy and rewarding for people to dip in and out, and for those who want to do more, consistently, to do so. We are still not nearly good enough at this. We have potentially good ideas, but we lack the resources to put them into action, so they are just ideas.

#### **c) The Council**

Depends. If they continue to be secretive, and unwilling to properly scrutinise, then it remains the slog we always thought it would be. If they... oh, who am I kidding - certainly not myself. There will be no Damascene conversion. It's gonna be Gadarene swine, all the way to the apocalypse.

Marion



#### **Why did you get involved?**

I was scared about climate change and needed an outlet for that that didn't ultimately feel meaningless and empty

#### **Why have you *stayed* involved?**

I found an outlet for that that didn't feel meaningless and empty. It's good to be around people with similar climate-based values to you (and it's fun sometimes!)

### **In the last year what's the thing that you think that cem has done *internally* that has mattered most**

The capacity building and willingness to communicate with each other has been so important, I don't think we'd all be here in the group if that wasn't the case

### **and externally what has mattered most?**

There's been lots of things- the outcome of the petition ultimately is a pretty monumental event for the things that we're doing, as is just the fact that we've openly and publicly survived as a climate group during a pandemic.

### **What are you proudest of?**

Also here, the fact that we've survived during a pandemic. On a personal level I feel proud that I'm able to make contributions now based on my personal skillsets that I wasn't able to do before.

### **What are the big challenges for CEM coming up in the next six months, with regard to**

#### **a) Its internal operations**

Not having too many operations/plates spinning when we're at risk of full capacity

#### **b) Its engagement with supporters**

Making sure heavily engaged supporters (such as those for SF) feel that their contributions and skillsets are valued as our operations continue to change/evolve

#### **c) The Council**

The likelihood that they continue to be TFC is obviously a challenge. If they continue to be evasive and smoke-and-mirror-y after breakthroughs with Pet Sounds that's not unexpected, but is still a drain on morale

Robbie

### **Why did you get involved?**

I wanted to be part of local climate activism where I could contribute meaningfully to a collective response to the worsening crisis conditions. During the pandemic, some of my usual hobbies went out the window, as well as paid employment for a couple of months. This made it seem more possible to get involved. I started off with some responses to emotional rescue posts, then I helped with some research on city-wide climate action, then I got involved with the petition for a climate scrutiny committee at the Council.



### **Why have you *stayed* involved?**

Mainly, I think CEM's aims are valuable, I like the other core group members and supporters, and I realised that I was picking up different skills. I stayed involved through the petition campaign in autumn 2020, which had its own momentum and end point. Afterwards I was invited to join the group and I agreed. Although I was worried about the time commitment, I was reassured that people don't mind if you have to say no to things.

**In the last year what's the thing that you think that cem has done *internally* that has mattered most**

I haven't been involved for as long as a year, but internally there was an in-depth exercise recently dubbed 'the prospectus' which got the core group people to think deeply about what CEM is and what it should be and how it could happen. As a new person in the core group, I found this exercise a valuable way of figuring out what the bigger picture is and what the strategy could be.

**and *externally* what has mattered most?**

Externally the petition has mattered most because it forced CEM out of its comfort zone and it has made waves at the Council who are now changing the scrutiny committee system so that climate can be better addressed.

**What are you proudest of?**

This may sound strange, but before CEM's crucial hour at Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee in February 2021 when Chloe presented our petition, I helped to put together a briefing note for the Councillors on the committee. I worked on it with Chloe and Adam and when finished I was incredibly proud of it. In truth I was more proud of all the effort that had gone into getting to that stage, rather than the note itself. The note was the symbol of many struggles, crystallised on to a couple of pages. I guess pride can be a cumulative thing.

**What are the big challenges for CEM coming up in the next six months, with regard to**

**a) Its internal operations**

I think the core group would benefit from expanding over the next six months with a new recruit or two, while keeping responsibilities and skills balanced so that there are no major points of failure in case core members leave. After all, they are 'core' for a reason. Longevity is the name of the game, and the next six months is still about strengthening foundations internally. Alas we have to be prepared for a very long climate emergency in Manchester.

**b) Its engagement with supporters**

Team scrutiny is showing a path forward whereby supporters can contribute meaningfully, over a sustained period, via efficient coordination. But scrutiny committees won't meet for a few months, and then we are into the summer season, where life may look different post-lockdowns. Can that momentum be sustained?

**c) The Council**

The new situation is the scrutiny committee with more climate remit. The old situation is that Manchester Council overall needs to take more responsibility for the city's emissions and climate response, rather than pretending to lead on issues that are in reality outsourced to a dysfunctional Agency. CEM will have to pressure the new 'climate' scrutiny committee, and the Council as a whole (as ever), to take an expansive view of the climate emergency rather than only talking 'in-house'.

## CEM's main repertoires

- Report writing
- Lobbying councillors
- Petitions
- Scrutiny
- Blogging
- Freedom of Information Act requests
- Handbooks
- Social media
- Convening with other groups
- Letters to the Editor

## Things we would like to do (better)

- Infographics
- Videos
- Podcasts (maybe)
- Practical Local Solidarity

## What is coming up

### The local elections

Climate Emergency Manchester is NOT endorsing any parties or individual candidates.

We are going to look at the various parties' manifestos

We are holding a Hustings on Monday 19th April at 7.45pm

We are also going to try to get all candidates (there's 149, and we probably won't get ALL of them) to answer a few basic questions (watch this space)

### Team SF (Scrutiny Fabulous)

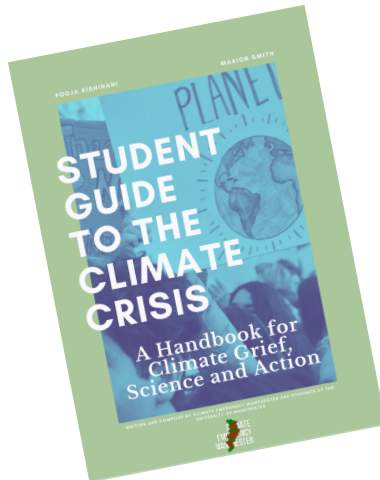
We already have a great team of people who report on what is and is not scrutinised at the City Council's six scrutiny committees. We want to expand that team in both numbers and what it covers. If you're interested, please get in touch - [contact@climateemergencymanchester.net](mailto:contact@climateemergencymanchester.net)





## The next version of the Student Climate Handbook

In September last year a brilliant climate handbook, aimed at students, had been led by two members of the core group, Pooja Kishnani and Marion Smith.



Well, on Thursday 20th May the second edition will be released.

It's not too late to get involved.

Please email [marion@climateemergencymanchester.net](mailto:marion@climateemergencymanchester.net) for more info.

## How to get involved

Our email is [contact@climateemergencymanchester.net](mailto:contact@climateemergencymanchester.net)

Our Twitter is @ClimateEmergMcr

We said it earlier, but it bears repeating.

We know that climate change is scary, really scary.

We know that it's easy to bury your head in the sand. And sometimes that's healthy.

We know that local authorities are opaque and confusing.

We also know that taking action with other people is one of the best ways of coping with the feelings of dread.

We know that you have limited time. And we know that you're worried about being emotionally blackmailed.

If you say yes to one thing, you're worried about being emotionally blackmailed into doing more and more. We won't do that.

No matter who you are, if you care about local climate action, there are jobs that need doing.

We'd love to hear from you.

If you want to get involved in what we do, our email is

[contact@climateemergencymanchester.net](mailto:contact@climateemergencymanchester.net)

## Appendix One: Ward “climate” action

Please find response below in relation to wards in the Central Neighbourhood Team.

### **Gorton and Abbey Hey**

#### Green Spaces

Volunteer Gardening Project – Debdale Diggers:

Sustainable action to maintain local green spaces

Friends of Debdale participation in Great Northern Trees Project:

Planting of 200 saplings

#### Food

Greenfingers Gardening Project:

Maintenance of local allotment and growing area with local volunteers

Being Well/ Growing Naturally Workshops/ Volunteering:

Sessions open to residents to learn principles of organic gardening with ability to plant own vegetables (in container to take home).

### **Ardwick**

#### Green Spaces (Health wellbeing and Nature Based Solutions)

Ardwick Green Spaces Steering Group – Quarterly meetings between both residents and stakeholders to decide best how to develop local green space in the ward leading to implementation.

Resident involvement - Increased greening with hedgerow planting along 250 metre section on Downing St /Lockton Close (alongside Mancunian Way). Later complemented by bulb planting and wildflowers throughout the neighbourhood as part of the #thebigplant #Growing Wild for bugs and bees project.

Fruit tree planting, bulb and wildflower areas planted in December 2020 with Sow the City.

Community and resident engagement (over 18 month period) to inform design and build of West Gorton Community Park. Developed to tackle climate change and combat flooding using nature based solutions. Contains wildflower areas and other plants which will drink up the surplus water.

## **Crumpsall Ward**

### Close Neighbours

Growing in Bowker Bank Woods, Crumpsall. These woods are visited regularly by residents and also maintained by volunteers from 'Close Neighbours' and 'Cleaner Crumpsall Residents Associations'.

### Cheetham and Crumpsall Horticultural Society

Members of Crumpsall & Cheetham allotments are involved with Cleaner Crumpsall. The Horticultural Society based at the allotments organise litter picks around their location including Hoddesdon St., Hazelbottom Road, Woodlands Road and the rear access to Abraham Moss School and Metrolink stop. Further engagement work planned to arrange visits to the allotments by local schools once Covid 19 restrictions allow.

### Cheetham Hill Cricket Club

Support local residents/groups regarding environmental issues (litter picks, fly tipping etc)

Increase health and wellbeing for residents by providing a excellent space for sports activities

Recycling of materials from the Abraham Moss Leisure Centre

### Abraham Moss Community School - Green Week Environmental Project including:

- Litter picking within the whole school, hide stones around the school and bring them back to class
- Travel into school by walking or using public transportation

### Irk Valley Primary School - Eco Team Project including:

- *Design/ make big banners and display them outside the school*
- *Make invitations to invite parents and local residents to community environment events*
- *Visits to recycling centre*
- *BIFFA to deliver lessons/ workshops*

## **Harpurhey ward**

### Fitter pickers

A local group who have come into their own during the pandemic, carrying out organised litter picks across the Ward, including Parks and Greenspaces.

#### Clean Air Day schools

Manchester Communication Academy and St Augustine's Primary school have both taken part in clean air day activities to promote active travel to school. Road closures were put in place to discourage driving to school for drop off and pick up.

#### Harpurhey Gardening Club

No.93 Community Centre - provides an opportunity to meet new people, get moving, and enjoy nature, giving residents skills to grow fruit and vegetables.

These activities have been supported by North Neighbourhood Team

#### **Sharston**

The Neighbourhood Team is supporting students at The Manchester College Wythenshawe campus to form an environmental group and adopt Park Wood, where they can help maintain the woodland. They are looking at applying for funding to look at improving the area for the community. Resident involvement has taken place through working with Wythenshawe Waste Warriors to put in place measures at an entrance to Park Wood to deter fly tipping.

Sharston has been included in a campaign "less is more" by Keep Manchester Tidy, that highlights the cost of clearing fly tipping in the ward. Promotional posters have been placed at hotspots in the ward showing that the cost in Sharston to clear fly tipping was £24,000 in 2020. Prior to the posters being displayed 1,200 leaflets were distributed to households in Sharston promoting the campaign. Keep Manchester Tidy engaged with Wythenshawe Waste Warriors to see what types of litter and fly tipping were found in the area. Additionally, Keep Manchester Tidy supplied Wythenshawe Waste Warriors with litter equipment to support their litter picking activities. Keep Manchester Tidy had discussions with Friends of Park Wood prior to the start of the campaign.