



Green Party

OUR VISION FOR A CLEANER, GREENER AND FAIRER MANCHESTER

2019 MANCHESTER MANIFESTO

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01 FOREWORD

The Green Party nationally is motivated by the desire to see the world become environmentally sustainable. We believe that this must be done by moving towards a society where wealth is more equally distributed among people, and where decisions are made on the basis of whether they will benefit people, and the planet, rather than whether they create profit.

This approach informs all of Manchester Green Party's policies too. We believe that all the issues we highlight in this manifesto are interconnected – an idea we find important to always bear in mind.

This manifesto lays out what Manchester Green Party stands for and the direction that we wish Manchester City Council to take. Local government has been frustrated in recent years by central government budget cuts and by the Greater Manchester devolution deal, which has given unclear powers to the region.

We believe the changes we want to see are achievable and if taken would see Manchester develop into a more equal, sustainable and enjoyable place to live. Yet we do not have a monopoly on good ideas, and we are keen to work with all who wish to achieve similar aims.

02 BREXIT

We believe that Manchester's future is best served by the UK remaining in the European Union or – if that is not possible – staying as close as possible to the EU.

That's why we will continue to campaign for a People's Vote referendum letting voters choose between the government's exit deal or staying in the EU, open to voters over the age of 16. We oppose a 'no deal' Brexit as this would be disastrous for the city of Manchester.

While we want the UK to remain in the EU, we are determined to tackle the underlying issues of inequality and marginalisation experienced by many of those who voted Leave in Manchester, including the undermining and privatisation of public services.

EU citizens deserve to be supported if the UK does leave the EU. For that reason, we would:

- Ensure that EU citizens across Manchester to be supported throughout the withdrawal process
- Campaign for a local-led advice service for EU citizens about permanent residence or British citizenship, should they wish to remain in the UK post-Brexit
- Campaign for EU citizens to retain their right to vote and stand in local elections

03 TRANSPORTATION

Manchester Green Party will:

- Support the development of an integrated traffic management plan and cycle network to favour active travel such as walking and cycling.
- Make walking safer by redesigning junctions where necessary.
- Support buses being brought back under public control. We also would like to see other forms of public transport – such as rail – brought back into public ownership.
- Argue for better integration of the transport system. For example, we will push for more bike storage at train and tram stations and for bike storage on trams.
- Use any additional council powers to ensure that public transport is cheap, regular and runs along the routes that people want to travel.
- Focus subsidies on a public transport service that meets community needs, not those of private operators.
- Campaign for more train and tram carriages, particularly at peak times.
- Promote planning which combines residential, commercial and leisure uses in the same space in order to reduce the need to travel and to promote stronger communities.
- Campaign for the introduction of Vision Zero, which aims to cut road deaths and accidents.
- We will also strive to find ways to better enforce existing traffic rules and regulations.
- Argue for greater disabled access on public transport and in car parks, as well as greater enforcement of existing laws. We aim to achieve a fully accessible transport system.
- Continue to argue that the national transport budget unfairly favours London.

04 LEISURE & CULTURE

Manchester Green Party will:

- Oppose any future library service downgrades and branch closures.
- Encourage the preservation of green spaces by opposing development on them. We encourage any ongoing developments to incorporate more green space as part of their planning, along with ecologically sustainable building methods.
- Explore options for the creation of new allotments.
- Argue that local arts spending should encourage participation with and funding for Manchester–based organisations, whilst engaging with a national audience.

05 HOUSING

Manchester Green Party will:

- Work towards building quality council homes that meet universal standards of design and accessibility. Additionally, we will look to renovate homes that remain empty.
- Continue to campaign against government rules which make building new social housing harder.
- Give social housing tenants greater control over the management of their homes and neighbourhoods.
- Argue that social housing is a good thing: it is owned collectively by our community, to provide homes for us when we need them. Any 'Right to Buy' programme must therefore ensure that any housing that is sold gets replaced with new social housing.
- Continue to oppose the 'bedroom tax' and cuts to housing support.
- Support the development of housing co-ops and co-housing projects in the city.
- Establish a not-for-profit letting agency to ensure that everyone receives support while finding a home.
- Introduce compulsory licensing of private landlords, as a means of ensuring decent housing standards.
- Explore options for capping rents to ensure they are truly affordable.
- Call for tenant representation on private sector arms-length management companies.
- Promote improving the quality of housing stock to help reduce household bills with energy efficient and water-saving upgrades.
- Call for a Housing Scrutiny Committee to be established as a way to respond to Manchester's housing problems.
- Argue against developers waiving their responsibility to provide a certain proportion of affordable housing.
- In the longer term, promote mixed-development planning across the city, so that more people can work and play near to where they live. This will help to reduce travel times and costs, decrease local air pollution and reduce global warming emissions.
- Consult with homeless people on policies for housing provision. Local authorities will advise and assist groups of homeless persons to make proposals about the use of empty property, and to put those proposals into effect.
- Support bringing back into use empty private sector homes in Manchester.

06 LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Manchester Green Party will:

- Support genuine devolution of powers from Westminster which are based on the results of an open public consultation.
- Continue to argue for proportional representation voting to be adopted at Council level.
- Allow the public to ask questions at scrutiny meetings. Currently the Council does not allow members of the public to ask questions in Council meetings, unless they have been submitted in writing before the meeting.
- Seek to end the top–down cabinet model of power at Manchester City Council. We will support a system where power is shared across the Council rather than being controlled by the Leader of the Council.
- Support the development of open consultative meetings in all wards on a regular basis, with local councillors and council officers in attendance. At these meetings, local people would hear the Council plans for local services and city–wide services that affect local areas.
- Reports of these proceedings must be presented to formal Council committee meetings, where members of the public have a right to comment and see who makes what decisions.
- Call for more open public access to Council data.
- Work to ensure that local government is open and accessible to all people regardless of disability, race, gender, sexuality, religion or anything else.

07 ECONOMY

Manchester Green Party will:

- Argue that our economy should stop destroying the natural systems of the planet on which we all depend. Instead, we should promote the sustainable future of our planet which we all live on and share.
- Continue to argue that the wealth of Manchester should be distributed across the City Council area, from Heaton Park to Woodhouse Park.
- Argue that the Council should procure more services from local businesses.
- Aim to promote local SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), rather than to continue the Council's current approach which sees the Council procuring less from small businesses than any other Council in Greater Manchester.
- Argue that Manchester City Council should focus on promoting local economic development rather than on promoting the relocation of multinational corporations to the Council area.
- Continue to argue that the cuts to public services are fundamentally unfair.
- Ensure resources continue to be available to support people starting co-ops and social enterprises.
- Argue for a truly ethical council procurement policy.

08 ENVIRONMENT

Manchester Green Party will:

- Call for carbon literacy training to be provided to all council citizens.
- Acknowledge that investing in carbon–neutral energy has been made harder by the government, but we still support the roll–out of green technology across the Council’s estate.
- Call for Manchester City Council to shift its waste system to give greater emphasis to recycling and reuse of waste.
- Call for an end to the Council investing in companies which harm the environment.
- Encourage Manchester City Council to monitor air quality on a regular basis and to make this data freely available.
- Argue for greater scrutiny of environmental issues by the Council and ensure that the issue of climate change is not ducked by the Council.
- Develop a plan for the Council which ensures carbon emissions are cut to levels which seek to prevent the worst effects of climate change.
- Develop targets to cut emissions based on scientific expertise. If these targets are not met an investigation should be held to find out why.
- Work on plans to mitigate the effects of climate change in Manchester.
- Develop a robust strategy to deal with extreme weather events, such as floods, based on independent scientific evidence.
- Develop a scheme to demonstrate the benefits of retro–fitting houses to become carbon–neutral.
- Oppose any applications to frack for shale oil or gas in the Council area or beyond.

09 EDUCATION

Manchester Green Party will:

- Oppose the building of new academies and free schools in all but exceptional cases.
- Explore options for the establishment for a Council–run school in the city centre.
- Work with the universities to ensure that citizens benefit more from their presence in the city. This might, for example, involve more public access to university buildings.
- Oppose unqualified teachers in classrooms. We encourage the employment of qualified teachers in our schools.
- Support skills training services, nursery care and schools staying in or returning to the public sector.
- Consult to develop ways which Manchester City Council can ensure the individual educational needs of disabled people are better met.
- Campaign against the implementation of PREVENT in the education system
- Support the development of teacher networks for mutual support and Professional Development.
- Develop support networks for parents that have problems with schools or teachers.

09 POLICING & COMMUNITY SAFETY

Manchester Green Party will:

- Ensure greater visibility of Local Action Teams dedicated to tackling anti-social behaviour.
- Develop local public forums where citizens can report problems to councillors, the police and council staff.
- Work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to set city-wide and local priorities for improving the quality of life of citizens.
- Argue for the establishment of domestic abuse drop-in sessions across the city.
- Seek to establish more effective links between community police and mental health services.
- Work with Greater Manchester Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner to bring disproportionality down to the national average. Any disproportionate rates of contact between the police and certain communities should be investigated.
- Work closely with Greater Manchester Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner and local communities to ensure that hate crimes of any kind are recorded and that an adequate strategy to tackle these crimes is developed.
- Argue for the establishment of Council Policing Committee.

10 HEALTH

Manchester Green Party will:

- Aim to implement a properly funded devolution plan which is focussed primarily on addressing the main specific health issues facing the city.
- Develop a much more effective health care programme which tackles deprivation and destitution.
- Encourage greater spending on mental health.
- Ensure individual social care budgets are conducted on a needs basis.
- Establish a city-wide insulation programme aimed at preventing illnesses connected to living in cold and damp housing.
- Promote healthy eating by supporting schemes such as cooking lessons and working with retailers to provide greater access to healthier options.
- Look into introducing stricter rules aimed at preventing new takeaways being built near schools or where there are already a high proportion of takeaways.
- Ensure public decision-making on health spending and options.
- Launch a new campaign to ensure that more people caring for friends and relatives get the support they need.
- Commission services with local not-for-profit providers wherever possible.
- Support Age Friendly initiatives.
- Work to ensure there are more publicly accessible toilets.
- Review health processes and outcomes for disabled people, especially those with learning difficulties and mental health service users, to eliminate systematic discrimination, avoid premature deaths and prevent inappropriate treatments in the hospital system.