

Hello and welcome to the April 2023 GCR Member's Brief.

The Government's annual budget (15 March) brought some excellent news for the region, that will help deliver a greener and fairer more prosperous city-region, the announcement of a trailblazing devolution deal for Greater Manchester. In our negotiations with Government, we have sought to secure additional powers and responsibilities over adult skills and education, transport, employment, housing and regeneration - all which allows greater flexibility, and responsibility, to focus resources where they're needed most. Green City areas of work benefitting from the deal include Retrofit and Net Zero Funding, Strategic Energy Planning, Nature Recovery and Adapting to Climate Change. [Read more.](#)

Within the same week as the budget, it was also [announced](#) that over 5,000 social homes across Greater Manchester are to receive energy efficiency improvements after the city-region was granted £37m from Wave Two of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The Government funding – granted by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero with an additional £60m contribution from the 18 social home providers, will see 5,438 social homes benefit from measures such as improved insulation, air source heat pumps, solar panels, draughtproofing, ventilation and heating controls in the programme worth £97m. Work will commence in April and be completed by September 2025, with social housing improvements being made across all districts.

Net zero featured heavily in the ten Greater Manchester projects to receive funding and support after being selected to become part of the city-region's Innovation Accelerator programme. Greater Manchester was asked by UK Government to pilot the Innovation Accelerator programme alongside Glasgow city-region and the West Midlands. The programme provides a total of £100m shared across the three regions, as well as support for developing each area's innovation ecosystem. [Read more.](#)

Should you want further information on any of the projects taking place in your area or city-region wide, either click on the hyperlink or contact the [GMCA Environment Team](#) who would be happy to help with detail.

Mark Atherton, Director of Environment, Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Five Year Environment Plan for Greater Manchester 2024 to 2029 - Update

Planning has commenced on the next reiteration of the Five Year Environment Plan for Greater Manchester. Our objective to be carbon neutral by 2038 is still considered achievable, but the pathway towards that is likely to exceed the carbon budget, and by a considerable margin unless decarbonisation is accelerated, as recently [reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) (20 March)

GM's ambition and priority remains rapid decarbonisation, with a desire to remain within or as close to the budget as possible. The upcoming refresh of the Five Year Environment Plan presents a significant opportunity for GM to focus and push-on in order to meet the 2038 target.

With a planned launch at the October 2024 Green Summit, the contents of the new plan will include: Introduction/overall vision, 2024-2029 targets, Action plan, Thematic Sections, Conclusion, glossary, annex. To find out how we're managing the development process, [view the GCR Partnership presentation.](#)

Finally, we will be seeking feedback on our plans from everyone who lives and works in Greater Manchester, we'll be providing updates on when and how on all our communications channels.

NEW GREATER MANCHESTER ENVIRONMENT RESOURCES:

A **Community Fridge pilot** has launched in Oldham by Greater Manchester Food Security Action Network, Hubbub and Coop, which brings people together to eat, connect, learn new skills and reduce food waste. This builds on the successful pilots delivered through Manchester's In Our Nature campaign. [Read more](#)

Power in the City by Carbon Coop, featuring authentic voices, places and stories showing the everyday, on-the-ground ways that people are responding to the climate emergency in their own neighbourhoods. The first series, has five episodes on topics including transport, solar and wind power, warm and affordable housing, and green jobs. [Listen to the episodes here.](#)

GREATER MANCHESTER ENVIRONMENT EVENTS:

New fully funded **Eco Innovation programme** (Eco-FORCE) launched by Business Growth Hub to support Greater Manchester businesses to move to more circular practices, reduce waste and carbon emissions. From 21st March – 18th April this is a 3 day in-person programme that will guide SMEs step-by-step towards new 'eco' commercial opportunities, equipping them with the tools to eliminate waste and grow. [Link to register interest](#)

Powering Our Communities - Electricity North West are hosting a Community Connects Webinar on the 11 May 23 (10am to 11:30) to launch the next round of their award-winning Powering Our Communities fund. [Find out more and register for the event.](#)

GMCA Environment Updates from November 2022 to April 2023

Energy

Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) – GM has been awarded £70k from Innovate UK's Net Zero Living programme to help accelerate delivery of the city-region's Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs). Project partners include Bruntwood, Regen, Electricity North West, Carbon Co-op, Green Longbow and Graham Oakes, with advisors Daikin, EY, Green Finance Institute, SSE Energy and Local Energy North West Hub.

DEEP Phase 3 (Heat and Energy Network Opportunity Areas) – Currently pending decision from Department for Energy on Stockport Centre project design for delivering net zero heat through sewer fed and geothermal. Oldham has commenced minewater-led detailed project design.

Go Neutral Smart Energy – Rochdale and Stockport Councils have shortlisted 4 schools for roof-mounted solar PV using unallocated ERDF grant, estimated circa 700kW installed capacity and £800k project value.

Smart Energy – A Solar PV Guide for schools has been developed and circulated for final comments. Currently asking districts to confirm the best methods for sharing with their schools.

Energy Innovation Agency (EIA) – Work continues to support innovators, with client agreements being signed to generate private fees. A dedicated subgroup of the Board has been set up to develop and implement a new finance model.

Buildings

Retrofit GM (Your Home Better) – New pricing structure has been developed to reflect the delivery cost of a dedicated solar survey offer and a comprehensive whole house retrofit plan. Your Home Better offer has been promoted to GMCA staff with encouraging results. Metrolink advertising planned for the end of March 2023.

ECO4 flex scheme (support for fuel poor/low-income households with home energy efficient upgrades) – Now appointed 3 approved [ECO4 installers](#): Improveasy Ltd, Next Energy Solutions Ltd and PHS Home Solutions Ltd T/A 0800 Repair, who will work directly with a dedicated Local Authority.

Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) – SSE appointed to provide Measurement and Verification support to the PSDS 3a programme with first deliverables expected before end March 2023. £1.78m grant secured for the PSDS 3b programme (circa £5.5m total project value).

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) – All 10 registered providers have commenced installations, with most of the 900+ retrofits to be completed by end of March 2023. The Department of Energy have provided a 3-month project extension to the end of June 2023.

Natural Environment

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) - The Trailblazer devolution deal set out that the Mayor will be responsible for developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Greater Manchester. This is expected to start later this spring, once the government publishes regulations and guidance. Resource and project management planning has started, in conjunction with Natural England and Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

Natural Course Phase 3 – A Greater Manchester planners survey has been completed to assess the barriers to delivering the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). An EU

Mission visit was successfully held in January 2023, with a focus on projects delivered in Greater Manchester.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - Workshops have been held with Districts to disseminate the results of the BNG Needs and Supply assessment. Defra additional burdens funding has been announced for the Districts and GMCA and a plan is being developed as to how to deploy this most effectively.

Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) - Five prospective BNG sites moving forward through baselining. GMEF offer has been promoted to all Districts to increase the number of sites being brought forward.

Greater Manchester Green Spaces Fund - Round 2 received 76 applications and a total of [31 projects have been awarded funding](#). Round 3 has [now been launched](#) and open for applications. A new Grant Manager and Communications officer have been appointed to the GMEF.

Green Social Prescribing – A request to extend funding has been unsuccessful. Alternative options are being currently being assessed by the Integrated Care System.

Sustainable Consumption & Production

Recycle for GM Community Fund - For the 3rd year, community groups can apply to access £220,000 for projects which help to reduce waste. [Apply online](#) from now until to noon on Friday 26th May.

Textiles and Fashion Working Group - A series of workshops have been held to underpin a feasibility study for a national sorting and recycling infrastructure demonstration. [Read more](#).

One Bin to Rule Them All - A workshop was held on 29th March 2023 to disseminate the findings of the project aimed at improving plastics recycling practices across Greater Manchester and the UK.

Reconmatic - 4-year project commenced to increase sustainability in waste management across the built environment. UK partners include University of Salford and University of Manchester.

GM Consumer Behaviour Insights - Procurement to commence (by end of March 2023) on work to identify low carbon solutions and levers to drive change.

Renew Hub - An Education pod for schools and community groups is now open to raise awareness of circular economy principles including repair and reuse.

Transport

The Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund projects (with final funding approval up to January 2023) will deliver approximately 55km of new Bee Network routes, of which 33km were completed as of January 2023.

The Bike Hire Scheme - Work continues to increase the number of stands, stations, and bikes on the street with a full fleet (1500) expected by May 2023.

E-Scooters - Trial continuing with a much higher use this winter. December 2022 had 25,834 trips compared to 12,126 in December 2021.

Clean bus fund - Currently 92% of buses awarded retrofit funding have been upgraded. Overall, the Greater Manchester based bus fleet will be circa 92% compliant once all planned retrofits and replacements have completed in the next 6 months.

General

View the [5-Year Environment Plan dashboards](#) for a more in-depth analysis of our progress.

CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

General enquiries [email](#) / Twitter: @GMGreenCity / GMCA Environment [Webpage](#) /

Green City Region news [Website](#)



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