

Greater Manchester mayoral election policy briefing

On 4 May, Greater Manchester will elect its first metro mayor. We've identified some of the key policy areas in the election based on the candidates' manifestos and the Manchester Evening News' **survey of over 10,000 residents** in Greater Manchester; health and social care, housing, jobs, inclusivity and transport.

Here, we've drawn on the expertise of academics at The University of Manchester and external partners to develop some key recommendations and challenges for whoever is elected next month. We are sending all of the candidates this briefing, inviting them to submit their responses to the points raised and their commitments on the issues, which we will collate and publish before the election.

Health and Social Care

"One of the central tenets of the Greater Manchester (GM) health and social care devolution deal was that existing statutory bodies would retain their respective responsibilities, and that the elected Mayor would not have statutory jurisdiction in this area. The Mayor, who will lead the GM Combined Authority, should therefore be aware of the complexities involved in this policy area; provide clear democratic oversight of the evolving service changes; and consider how they can best influence and support the established Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, of which they will become part, to enable improvement to the broader health and wellbeing of the GM population."



Dr Anna Coleman,

Deputy Lead of Health Policy, Politics and Organisation Research Group, Centre for Primary Care

"Figures suggest that 20% of adolescents will experience a mental health problem at any given time, while 10% of children aged 5-16 have a mental health need which could be clinically diagnosed. While front line services supporting child and adolescent mental health are significantly over-stretched, the societal and economic costs of mental health difficulties in limiting access to paid employment, independent living and community inclusion remain enormous."



The mayor should:

- Champion the recognition of mental health and wellbeing in schools
- Encourage and enable schools to put in place the policies and best practice to ensure interventions at all levels to be most effective
- Prioritise the insights of young people and respect their experience; include genuine consultation with young people in policy approaches to mental health in schools

Dr Cathy Atkinson,

Lecturer in Education & Child Psychology, Manchester Institute of Education

[Read Cathy's blog on improving mental health in schools](#)

Housing

"Since 2004, housing costs have risen by 26 per cent while incomes have fallen, with housing affordability dropping as a result. Homeownership is down 15 percentage points since 2003 – the largest fall in the country. At the same time we have seen a correspondingly large rise in people moving into the private rented sector where costs are higher and tenures short and often uncertain. The new mayor will need to address this. The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework is a good place to start – providing an opportunity to plan where and how many homes need to be built."



Stephen Clarke,
the Resolution Foundation, and
Professor Ruth Lupton,
Head of Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit

[Housing affordability blog- will the mayor help Manchester get what it wants, this time?](#)

"Homelessness is on the rise. However, what many do not see is the increasing numbers of single homeless households living in substandard accommodation but not rough sleeping. Single homeless households living in unsupported temporary accommodation are hidden and ignored. They are stuck in substandard accommodation in which they are unsafe and are affected by worsening mental and physical health. In addition, many do not have the option to move on, even if the desire was there."



The mayor should:

1. Temporary Accommodation Boards
2. Greenlists and exclusion lists
3. Minimum set of standards
4. Proper in-tenancy support

Christa Maciver,
Justlife

[Read more about the rise of hidden homelessness](#)

Jobs

"Employers must be supported to recognise the intuitive, strategic case for paying the living wage. Paying a wage that supports a decent standard of living is not just the responsible thing to do. There are clear business, social and economic benefits. Through the living wage we can include more people in the benefits of prosperity. It's time to proactively challenge key employers to take the practical step of registering for accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation."



Alec Spencer,
Greater Manchester Living Wage
Foundation

[Why fair pay must be a priority for Manchester's new mayor](#)

"Greater Manchester has high levels of poverty not only among those unemployed or outside the labour market but among the working poor. This arises in part because of low hourly pay (23% of all employees earn below the recommended voluntary living wage in GM) but also because of insecure contracts where hours are varied at short notice – such as zero hour contracts."



The Mayor should first ensure all the local authorities lead by example and marshal their considerable procurement power to promote good employment practices along their supply chains. This means adding campaigns for ending the use of insecure contracts and false self-employment to the already growing demands for GM companies to sign up to the voluntary living wage.

The GM authority should also take a lead in promoting the enforcement of existing rights, both by actively reporting violations and by developing new ways of supporting those individuals who are being exploited but who now cannot afford the very high fees required to be paid to take cases to employment tribunals."

Professor Jill Rubery,
Professor of Comparative Employment
Systems, Head of People, Management
and Organisation, Alliance Manchester
Business School

Inclusivity

"Like many other cities, Greater Manchester faces ongoing challenges of widespread poverty, low pay, labour market inequalities and an uneven pattern of economic growth which has left many people and places behind. We need a new 'inclusive growth' approach in which more people can contribute to and benefit from prosperity. The election of the mayor is a great opportunity to set this vision, and he or she will need to use their 'soft powers', working across private, public and civil society sectors, to turn this into a reality"



Professor Ruth Lupton,
Head of Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit

[Read Ruth's blog on what the new mayor should do for inclusive growth](#)

"The '[life on the line](#)' map we produced from our research highlights striking inequalities in life expectancy across Greater Manchester. Many working people live in poverty their whole lives and this affects their education, health and wellbeing; poverty is a long-term issue and so it needs a long-term solution. The new mayor should ensure they have the best evidence to inform their decisions and to measure impact and change when trying to improve the lives of people across Greater Manchester."



Dr Kingsley Purdam

[Read more about the 'life on the line' research'](#)

"The UK cabinet has 37% women members and half the Scottish cabinet are women. 50% of the 2million electorate in Greater Manchester are women, yet the cabinet the metro mayor will lead from the 8th May will be made up of 9 men and only one woman. The mayor should lay out a clear plan when coming in to office on what they will do to ensure more women are round the cabinet table and that women and other underrepresented communities across Greater Manchester have a voice in policy making"



Professor Francesca Gains

[Read Francesca's blog on what devo can do for women](#)

Transport

"The challenge for the incoming mayor is that of seizing the opportunities of transport projects to improve the rail networks and roads which are not within the devolution arrangements as such. But, building on the example of successive mayors of Greater London, there is much to be done in campaigning and lobbying in order to make Greater Manchester's voice heard in Whitehall, and to address the bias in present investment appraisal methods towards following economic growth rather than stimulating that growth."



Advice for the mayor:

- Champion simultaneous construction of 2a and 2b routes for HS2
- Do not neglect importance of road improvements both for economic growth and environmental sustainability
- Be a campaigning Mayor for better transport, do not allow devolution specifics to limit scope of action

Prof Graham Winch,

Director for Social Responsibility and Professor of Project Management at Alliance Manchester Business School

[Read Graham's blog on improving transport in Greater Manchester](#)

"Our key partners certainly found the living lab model a useful one. For instance Manchester City Council told us that the project had "added enormously" to the city's understanding of how cycling can add to its economic, environmental and social objectives, saying it had been of "immense value" not just to the council but also to Transport for Greater Manchester and the strategic health authority"



Key recommendations for the mayor:

- Commit to continuing to make Manchester a great 'cycling city'
- Engage with the 'living lab' approach to developing evidence-based policy solutions to key transport questions
- Explore 'twinning' options with cities like Berlin, to share the knowledge and policies that have built their success

Professor James Evans,

Geography professor

[Read more in James' blog](#)