



I would like to thank Only Planet Manchester for this opportunity to express the views of the Manchester Conservatives on an environmentally friendly and green agenda for Manchester.

The challenges on carbon emission levels, lifestyle changes, energy sources, nuclear energy, water supplies, natural disasters, and so on, are on an epic scale. The people of the world, the international community, political parties and governments of all colours and persuasions must join to meet this challenge.

However, the green agenda also has a very individual and localised dimension. Having garden space, clean streets, rubbish collection, encouraging energy efficiency, recycling, supporting public transport and cycling, recreational grounds and parks, all form part of the same critical concern for the environment.

What is clear is that any green strategy has to be all-embracing, effective, and perhaps most importantly involve innovation and thinking outside the box. The Conservative nationally have done, and continue to do the following:

1. **Raise the profile of "green issues"** to the forefront of national political debate.
2. **Win hearts and minds.** Members of the public need to be won over and brought on side in tackling green issues. They often see green issues as a disguise to cut services and introduce taxes. The Conservatives pledge that any green taxes would be offset against other taxes. The commitment is to changing behaviour and not raising revenue.
3. **Trust and enable people to join in the "green" revolution.** For example, we want to see a decentralised energy revolution in Britain. Instead of relying on the large centralised energy providers of old, we want Britain to adopt micro-generation: small providers, including homes and businesses, producing energy for their own use, using a variety of methods from combined heat and power (CHP) to wind to photovoltaic power. We would introduce a new system of 'feed-in tariffs', by which people are paid for the energy they produce. This will stimulate diversity and decentralisation of our power supply, as well as incentivise energy-saving.

At a local level too, particularly in Manchester, we are committed to "green issues":

1. **We oppose the Congestion Charge.** The greatest irony is this is an anti-environment charge. It involves the Council taking a £1.2bn loan to be repaid over 30 years from charges on motorists. It therefore requires a continued high-level of car use in order to make these remortgage repayments. It does not aim to cut car use but in fact encourage it. The only realistic solution to cutting carbon emissions from car use has to be offering unconditional, affordable, reliable and extensive public transport options.
2. **We campaign with local residents groups to safeguard green spaces.** For example, we have been fighting hard for Piccadilly gardens, and we recently supported a village green application in Charlestown for an area of scenic Woodlands to be protected from Council development proposals.
3. **We are campaigning to encourage tree planting** across the city and to ensure the Council plants new trees wherever they get away with removing existing ones.

Kashif Ali, Deputy Chairman of the Manchester Conservatives. One A4 page is never enough to discuss the huge variety of topics on this issue, so for more information or to support us contact us through www.manchesterconservatives.com