MANCHESTER ARTS SUSTAINABILITY TEAM

5 years of cultural collaboration for a more sustainable Manchester

2011-2016 REPORT

JULY 2017



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Manchester Arts Sustainability Team (MAST) is a cross-sector network of cultural and arts organisations committed to working together to reduce their environmental impacts and foster a collaborative learning ethos which unites art forms, organisations, voluntary and civic bodies in a shared commitment to a sustainable and equitable future.

hese are choppy times; orthodoxies that have, more or less, underpinned our lives for the last fifty years are eroding rapidly as the consequences of exponential consumption reliant on a fossil-fuelled economy are felt. This is manifest most keenly as climate change: the causes, consequences and forecasts. This, in turn, is fuelling a cultural transition, a creative movement acting on climate change and its many, interconnected themes.

MAST is a pioneer within this movement. Committed to principles of distributed leadership, iterative learning and mutual respect, this network of 27 arts and cultural organisations working together since 2011, has become one of the city's, and indeed the country's, most successful demonstrations of the

role the sector can play in positive environmental change. And it has much to celebrate, notably:

- a 16% emissions reduction over three years;
- a broad range of practical environmental actions and employee and audience engagement: exhibitions exploring our relationship to nature theatre and television productions on climate change, employee beekeeping, community gardening, and much else besides, most MAST members have explored environmental themes in programming and learning and outreach activities;
- **involvement in the city's ambitious new climate change strategy** including through Climate Lab, an experimental programme inviting the people of Manchester to imagine a more sustainable city;
- a **range of successful partnerships**, from developing the city's Carbon Literacy training, to partnerships between individual members and organisations such as Transport for Greater Manchester and the National Trust, and;
- recognition of Manchester as a 'Good Practice City' under the EU's URBACT programme, based on the MAST model and its contribution to the city's climate change policies.

MAST's combination of participatory and collaborative working in a city which recognises the value of culture and is itself demonstrating climate change leadership has helped to make this programme so successful. It has been strengthened by Arts Council England's environmental programme which includes many MAST members.

EXECTIVE SUMMARY •••

Cities and policy-makers are beginning to recognise that the creative sector has a vital role in city life that has huge potential to support city priorities, such as the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals. With the Manchester Climate Change Strategy 2017-2050 in place and five years of experience to build on, now is the time for MAST to reflect on how it can:

- lead in working towards the city's climate change ambitions;
- grow its reach and influence across the arts and culture in Manchester and beyond, and;
- use this opportunity to grow an ethically driven creative economy new skills, jobs and opportunities for a sustainable Manchester

Key areas for MAST to focus on now are:

- defining a new set of commitments, targets and actions in line with the city's zero carbon, zero waste and climate resilience ambitions;
- supporting delivery of the engagement strand of the city's climate change strategy;
- developing skills, capacity and collaboration within the network to support a new level of ambition;
- growing and developing the MAST network;
- increasing MAST's profile, and;
- exploring funding options to enable MAST to build on its success.

"Manchester has a deeply embodied culture of community and resilience so it comes as no surprise that the city has an ambitious approach to climate change. But is also a city that has creativity in its bones, and so it is – happily – predictable that the cultural community has come together to share, solve and scale environmentally focused initiatives. Initially focused on the nuts and bolts of doing, MAST activities have blossomed into a huge range of culture/environment practice, using creativity to engage communities and ensure culture shapes Manchester's ambitious new climate change strategy."

Alison Tickell, Founder and Director Julie's Bicycle

