



# SUSTAINABLE EVENTS GUIDE

SMALL  
**OUTDOOR EVENTS**



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL

Julie's Bicycle  
SUSTAINING CREATIVITY





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Guides and websites to plan your next sustainable outdoor event.

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### *GUIDES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR:*

Events in indoor venues  
Major Outdoor Events  
Community Events Suppliers  
Production Suppliers  
Food & Drink Traders  
Waste & Cleansing Services



# INTRODUCTION

Manchester City Council is committed to ensuring that the events we organise, support and host contribute to making Manchester a thriving, progressive and attractive city and to the economic, social and environmental well-being of our city. Information on the council's sustainable events commitment and initiatives, as well as the range of sustainable event guides available for event organisers, suppliers, service providers and venues is available on our Sustainable Events webpage.

Of the three strands of impact, the environmental aspect deserves particular emphasis given that climate change is one of the most urgent issues facing us today and leaves no corner of the planet untouched. It is clear from the increasing floods, wildfires and other weather related disasters that

the effects are taking place right now. In response to this global issue, in 2018 Manchester set the ambitious target of becoming a zero carbon city by 2038.

As the booker or end user of one of our outdoor event locations for small scale events, you can make a difference in helping to have the best possible impact in particular by:

- providing and supporting measures to reduce the environmental impact of your events e.g. energy, waste, travel
- choosing food and drink providers, merchandise and give-aways which have been sustainably and/or locally sourced
- promoting fair pay and contracts



# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide aims to provide you with inspiration on the kind of actions you can take as regards:

- what you are already doing on sustainability for specific events and
- what you can commit to doing on sustainability for specific events

It is split into sections and it may be that you concentrate on one area to begin with (e.g. travel) then the following year you broaden your aims to other areas (e.g. energy and food & drink). It's your guide to use as best suits you and your event as you work towards leaving the most positive impact of your event.

Whilst this guide is intended as a checklist and inspiration for you, we'd love you to use this opportunity to tell us more about what you are doing or plan to do, please complete and return this form to [sustainable-events@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:sustainable-events@manchester.gov.uk). We're keen to know where good ideas can be shared or where more support is needed. Please use the 'How' column to record a few details (don't just tick the boxes). This is helpful for sharing knowledge within your organisation, to us and to other organisations who can learn from you.

## It's not easy but it'll be worth it

We know that managing an event in an environmentally sustainable way can be a challenge. The pop-up nature of events makes them vulnerable to the global culture of disposability and waste that happens in daily life, but which is having devastating impacts on our planet. The often short timescale of events can also present difficulties around finding ways to reduce negative environmental impacts.

Sometimes there might be an initially high cost to providing a lower impact solution (like reusable cups instead of disposable) but over time you will see reduced costs as you shouldn't have to buy as many (throwaway) items.

We don't have all the answers but we're working to find out more about how to reduce the negative impacts of events, including those we deliver ourselves, so please do keep in touch with us and we'll continue to learn and improve together.

**Note:** this guide goes beyond obligations which you may already have under law, license or contract, e.g. disposing of waste within the law, respecting noise limits, complying with health and safety standards.

There are free online tools to help you monitor the environmental impact – see resources section of this guide.

# CHECKLIST

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## EVENT DETAILS



Name of event \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of event \_\_\_\_\_

Location of event \_\_\_\_\_

Your role (e.g. event manager, space booker) \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation name \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your email \_\_\_\_\_

Your phone number \_\_\_\_\_



# WHAT YOU ARE DOING OR CAN DO FOR THIS EVENT

## ENERGY

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If using temporary power (usually via generators), accurately assess power demand beforehand to avoid over-specifying generators — understand power ratings and limit running times as this can save costs

If using temporary power (usually via generators), use low or zero carbon power sources, e.g. hybrid or biodiesel generators

Ask event power users including sound and lighting companies to use energy efficient equipment

Get readings on event power use from energy / power suppliers — monitor this to see if you can reduce it (this can save you money)\*

Further comments

| N/A | Already doing |    | If yes, do we need to improve? | Commit to do | How |
|-----|---------------|----|--------------------------------|--------------|-----|
|     | Yes           | No |                                |              |     |
|     |               |    |                                |              |     |
|     |               |    |                                |              |     |
|     |               |    |                                |              |     |
|     |               |    |                                |              |     |
|     |               |    |                                |              |     |

\* Free tools are available online for monitoring environmental impact — see Resources section of this document

# WATER & WASTE



Make access to mains water or bulk water dispensers available\* to, e.g. staff/contractors, participants, event goers. Consider providing refillable bottles.

\*Standpipes could be used for access to mains but bowser or tanker deliveries are an option if mains is unavailable

Provide recycling facilities – at least plastic bottles, cans, glass – and appropriate signage. Or ensure you separate waste you take off site.

Remember – always use clear signage

If having anything built bespoke for your event, ask company to use reclaimed, reused or sustainably sourced materials and design it for reuse or recycling

Monitor and report event waste – types, volumes, disposal\*

Further comments

| N/A | Already doing |    | Commit to do | How |
|-----|---------------|----|--------------|-----|
|     | Yes           | No |              |     |
|     |               |    |              |     |
|     |               |    |              |     |
|     |               |    |              |     |
|     |               |    |              |     |
|     |               |    |              |     |
|     |               |    |              |     |

\* Free tools are available online for monitoring environmental impact — see Resources section of this document





# TRAVEL

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Provide event-goers with information on low and zero carbon travel options (e.g. public transport, bike)

Ask people where they travelled from and how and report on event travel and use a carbon calculator to estimate travel impacts\*

Further comments

| N/A | Already doing |    |                                | Commit to do | How |
|-----|---------------|----|--------------------------------|--------------|-----|
|     | Yes           | No | If yes, do we need to improve? |              |     |
|     |               |    |                                |              |     |
|     |               |    |                                |              |     |
|     |               |    |                                |              |     |

\* Free tools are available online for monitoring environmental impact — see Resources section of this document



# FOOD & DRINK



|  | N/A | Already doing |    |                                | Commit to do | How |
|--|-----|---------------|----|--------------------------------|--------------|-----|
|  |     | Yes           | No | If yes, do we need to improve? |              |     |
| Use traders which can demonstrate as many sustainable practices as possible (e.g. Fair Trade, locally sourced, seasonal, vegetarian, vegan, organic, animal welfare standards or sustainably sourced seafood). Ideally traders should have NCASS certification   |     |               |    |                                |              |     |
| Cut the plastic! Ban the use of damaging, single use materials e.g. plastic bags and cups, straws, polystyrene boxes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use reusable/washable serveware which could include a cup deposit scheme</li><li>• If reusable is not possible, use disposable serveware that is compostable, biodegradable, made from recycled plastic (r-PET) or sustainably sourced wood but check with your waste provider first that they can take it</li><li>• Support the City of Machester's <b>plastic-free campaign</b></li></ul> |     |               |    |                                |              |     |
| Ask traders to reduce, reuse and recycle packaging and food waste, e.g. bulk dispensing instead of single sachets, recycle oils, compost or recycle food waste, redistribute surplus food  |     |               |    |                                |              |     |
| If food prep done on-site ensure correct separation, storage and disposal of used oils and fats to avoid pollution   |     |               |    |                                |              |     |
| Further comments   |     |               |    |                                |              |     |



# SUPPLIERS

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|   | N/A | Already doing |    |                                | Commit to do | How |
|---|-----|---------------|----|--------------------------------|--------------|-----|
|   |     | Yes           | No | If yes, do we need to improve? |              |     |
| Choose local businesses for event services and supplies   |     |               |    |                                |              |     |
| Choose merchandise and give-aways which are sustainably sourced   |     |               |    |                                |              |     |
| Tell prospective and existing suppliers that you are trying to reduce negative environmental impacts and ask if they have any new ideas or initiatives. |     |               |    |                                |              |     |
| Further comments  |     |               |    |                                |              |     |



# WORKERS



|  | N/A | Already doing |    |                                | Commit to do | How |
|--|-----|---------------|----|--------------------------------|--------------|-----|
|  |     | Yes           | No | If yes, do we need to improve? |              |     |
| Pay at least the Manchester Living Wage to all staff or contractors working at the event |     |               |    |                                |              |     |
| Avoid zero-hour contracts for all staff and/or contractors working at event              |     |               |    |                                |              |     |
| Further comments   |     |               |    |                                |              |     |

# USEFUL GUIDES & WEBSITES

## Energy

Powerful Thinking [Guide to Smart Energy for Festivals and Events](#)

Powerful Thinking [What to Ask Your Energy Supplier Factsheet](#)

## Waste & Cleansing

Julie's Bicycle [Waste Management at Outdoor Events](#)

## Travel & Transport

[Sustrans](#) sustainable transport campaign

## Food & Drink

Raw Foundation and Kambe Events [Plastic Free Festivals Guide](#)

Feeding Manchester's [guidance on sustainable food](#)

[FareShare Greater Manchester](#) food waste charity

Manchester City Council Sustainable Events [Guide for Food and Drink Traders](#)

## Suppliers

Julie's Bicycle [Sustainable Procurement Guide](#)

Manchester City Council Sustainable Events Guide for Production Suppliers



## CARBON FOOTPRINT TOOLS

Powerful Thinking **festive fuel tool**

**Julie's Bicycle's CG Tool** to understand the environmental impacts of cultural buildings, offices, outdoor events, tours, and productions





# SPECIAL THANKS

## Julie's Bicycle

SUSTAINING CREATIVITY

Special thanks to Julie's Bicycle for the extensive work carried out in producing this guide.

Julie's Bicycle is a charity with 11 years' experience supporting the creative community across the UK to take direct action on climate change and the environment.

Julie's Bicycle is an internationally recognised expert in the field of creative industries and climate action and has trail-blazed the methodologies, resources and research, narratives, and values to ensure a rapid and just transition for a new green creative economy.



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