

Community Wealth Building – Greater Manchester and the Preston Model

Last month GMPA Director [Graham Whitham wrote](#) about the consequences of a failing economic model and how Greater Manchester can build an alternative local economy that addresses these challenges. We invited Councillor Matthew Brown to respond based on his work in Preston.

Communities in Greater Manchester and across the country must ask some quite challenging questions if we are serious about tackling inequality, with the last decade seeing the exacerbation of a systemic crisis rooted in the dysfunctional nature of corporate capitalism.

The global economic downturn which struck ten years ago saw billions of pounds of public money bail out a financial system under little form of regulation and democratic control. Despite this injection of public wealth banks lend little to local businesses and large corporations often sit on wealth rather than invest to create jobs and growth. As a result austerity continues to bite and inequality and insecurity continues to grow.



Matthew Brown

In this context it is not unfair to conclude the system is broke, [as GMPA has recently argued](#), and new and radical solutions are needed to fix it. The interest shown in what has become known as ‘The Preston Model’ or Community Wealth Building offers part of this solution by building more democratic and self sufficient local economies. It is a strategy employing many levers to create and retain wealth in place and tackle inequality from the grassroots upwards.

In Greater Manchester, ‘anchor institutions’ such as councils, universities, hospitals and housing associations spend billions every year on goods and services as part of their everyday business. Much more of this wealth sitting in communities already could be redirected to local suppliers, expand social outcomes like the real Living Wage and the number of democratic enterprises like cooperatives. I know that the [Centre for Local Economic Strategies \(CLES\)](#) and the University of Manchester, through the [Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit \(IGAU\)](#), have already instigated a meeting earlier in the year with many anchors, and plans are afoot to explore how an anchor approach could be progressed. Furthermore, CLES are working with Oldham Council and partners on an anchor approach, and that is an excellent basis for scaling up the approach across GM, assisted by Oldham Leader Cllr Jean Stretton's role, as GM lead on equality, fairness and cohesion.

In Preston, [we have collaborated with CLES](#) and around 10 local public sector organisations since 2013 to instigate a cultural shift that has seen a £200m investment dividend across Lancashire by the local public sector, more than triple goods and services bought from suppliers in Preston and double from Lancashire. The amount of GVA added we calculate has supported 1500 jobs in Preston and increased the number of people receiving the real Living Wage. We see there are significant gaps in the local supply chain and are working with our university and others to potentially fill some of these with worker led cooperatives to inject more democracy into the local economy.

Manchester City Council very successfully pioneered a similar strategy from 2007 onwards with CLES to increase their own spend in the Manchester economy from 51% to 73%. If this was scaled up to persuade the vast majority of the local public sector in Greater Manchester to support local suppliers, expand the social economy and social value outcomes it could be transformative.

Local and public banking and energy democracy are other essential tools to tackle inequality and democratise local economies. The extractive nature of many large banks needs to be challenged by promoting alternatives which also instil a sense of civic pride.

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Community Wealth Building – Greater Manchester and the Preston Model continued

Preston City Council is currently exploring opportunities to establish the Lancashire Community Bank based upon the successful German Sparkassen model which ensures Germany possesses the most vibrant SME base in Europe. Preston has also joined with another local authority to launch a not for profit local alternative to the Big 6 energy companies called Red Rose Fairerpower offering fairer, more accountable energy to Lancastrians.

Local investment by public sector pension funds, credit unions, living wage policies, municipal enterprise and employee ownership are other ideas which build new economies from the grassroots upwards creating social movements which genuinely 'take back control' by promoting local ownership. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Mayor Andy Burnham are aware of the anchor approach and are ideally placed to bring such initiatives together in a coordinated way with many of these ideas already growing within the city region.

Despite best intentions local government has often been seen as a little too managerial when it should be transformative. The severity of the system problem we face is arguably contributing to outcomes like the decision to leave the European Union out of a sense of misplaced anger despite the EU contributing much to our region. That debate aside we have little choice but to seek new solutions to protect our communities. To do this we must be brave and radical. When the problems remain big the solutions to tackle them must be big also. Let the movement grow in GM!

Councillor Matthew Brown is Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Inclusion & Policy on Preston City Council. You can [read more about the Preston Model in context here.](#)

Living Wage Week – [the annual celebration of the Living Wage movement in the UK](#) – commences on **Sunday November 5th** and there are a range of events for you to attend and support.

The Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign, hosted by GMPA, is running three events, supporting the GM Combined Authority led public engagement process for the proposed GM Good Employment Charter:

Tuesday November 7th 8 - 10am

Hosted by Darren Knight, Chief Officer, Bolton CVS
Venue: Bolton Hub, Bold St, Bolton BL1 1LS

Thursday November 9th 8 - 10am

Hosted by Ben Gilchrist, Deputy Chief Executive Action Together
Venue: First Choice Homes Oldham First Place, 22 Union Street, Oldham. OL1 1BE

Friday 10th November 10.30am - 1pm (this agenda also includes an additional Living Wage item)

Hosted by Alison Page Chief Executive Salford CVS
Venue: The Angel Centre, 1 St Philip's Pl, Salford M3 6FA



These events will be an opportunity for you to raise your questions as well as feed in your thoughts and hopes for the Charter. Please contact [Lynn Sbaih](#) to register your attendance. For more information, please see [Good Jobs in Greater Manchester: the role of employment charters](#) **Other events in Living Wage Week:**

Monday November 6th Our colleagues, from the Living Wage Foundation and GM Citizens, will be in Manchester to announce the new real Living Wage rate. Please look out for news about the time and venue.

Wednesday November 8th Unison will be visiting University of Manchester Students' Union and on **Thursday November 9th**, they will be visiting The Union, Manchester Metropolitan University. They will also be visiting other colleges, around Greater Manchester, throughout Living Wage Week. This is to highlight and support the fact that young workers, under 25 years, also need to be paid a real Living Wage.

Wednesday November 8th 1pm: Outside the University of Manchester Students' Union, there will be an unveiling of their main Living Wage plaque.

Thursday November 9th 7.30 - 8pm: Unison will be holding a vigil outside BUPA Gorton Parks Nursing and Residential Care Home, M18 8DF. The vigil is dedicated to BUPA staff who are not paid the real Living Wage. Please meet at Gorton Park, across the road from the care home, at 1900.

We hope you will join us at all these events, during Living Wage Week, as well as on social media, and help spread the real Living Wage message across Greater Manchester.

We are delighted to be inviting you to attend the following event:

Rethinking Poverty: Can Greater Manchester lead the way?

A Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) and Webb Memorial Trust event

On Monday December 4th, 2017, 3:30 - 6:30pm
at the Methodist Central Hall*, Oldham St, Manchester M1 1JQ

On December 4th leading figures from across the city region, including **Mayor Andy Burnham**, will come together to ask how Greater Manchester can lead the way in developing new initiatives to tackle poverty and create a society that works for all.

The event will use the recently published *Rethinking Poverty - What Makes a Good Society?* by **Webb Memorial Trust Director Barry Knight** to frame discussions.

The book argues that in our society, a wealthy minority flourish, while around one-fifth experience chronic poverty and many people on middle incomes fear for their futures. We will hear directly from Barry who will argue that social policy has failed to find answers to these problems and there is now a demand for a new narrative to enable us to escape from this crisis.

Leading figures from across the city region, including Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, will give their response to the book and set out how they believe we can do things differently here.

There will be time for networking at the beginning and close of the event. Places are limited so please book as soon as possible via [Eventbrite](#).

*The Hall has full wheelchair access

The event follows on from, and will make reference to, Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit's '[Local Approaches to Improving the Quality of Work](#)' conference - see below. There is a half hour overlap between these events - the conference finishes at 4.30pm. You are welcome to join us slightly later if you are also attending IGAU's conference but please let us know through the Eventbrite contact form so we can make sure enough seats are set aside for everyone who will be coming in after the event starts

Local Approaches to Improving the Quality of Work

On Monday 4th December 4th, 9.15am - 4.30pm from
at the Pendulum Hotel, Sackville Street, Manchester M1 3BB



While employment levels continue to rise we have less cause to celebrate certain other increases, like widening pay inequalities and the growth of the working poor. The UK's flexible labour market also leaves considerable scope for employers to shift risks onto their workers, leaving gaps in protection for some of the most vulnerable.

What can be done to address these challenges? There are no easy fixes – as the Taylor review has made clear – but might local action help us to make progress? Research and practice point to ways that employers, campaigners and policymakers can engage in this agenda. In particular, the Greater Manchester mayor, Andy Burnham, has committed to introduce an employment charter for the city-region, an idea also being explored in other parts of the UK. How can good ideas be taken forward and scaled up and how much can be done at a local level?

Drawing on examples from Greater Manchester and beyond, this important and timely conference will bring together business leaders, HR professionals, trades union representatives, local and national policy makers and others to discuss what can be done to promote quality, well-paid work locally.

Confirmed speakers include: Matthew Taylor, Royal Society of Arts, Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester and Professor Damian Grimshaw, Alliance Manchester Business School

[More information and to register](#)

Do something warm this winter: Wrap Up Manchester

Donations accepted November 13th - 24th, 2017

Do you have an old winter coat you no longer wear that's taking up space in your wardrobe? Well, now's your chance to hand it over to someone who really needs it.



That's what Wrap Up Manchester is all about. It's a heart-warming, award-winning winter campaign where we ask people like you to hand over your winter coat so we can re-home it through homeless shelters, refugee centres, women's refuges and other charities. They are given directly to help those most likely to struggle to keep warm during the winter months. Simple. We take any size, colour, and style. We're into one thing only - doing something warm to keep people warm.

Manchester needs your coat We need men's, women's, and children's coats - especially men's coats – so we can help keep Manchester warm. Please note, that we are unable to accept fur or any other donated items other than warm coats for Wrap Up Manchester.

Please visit our [website](#) for details on where and when to hand over your unwanted coat.

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Employee Volunteering

Many companies in the UK are now encouraging their staff to take a few days a year away from their job, but not using their annual leave, to volunteer with a local charity or community project. Research has shown that it benefits the businesses hugely with, for example, increased motivation and morale, higher staff retention and better recruitment, customer loyalty and community engagement as well as it being good for PR and their corporate image. The staff also benefit individually with a sense of achievement, better health and wellbeing and job satisfaction. The charity or community host gain too with a raising of public awareness, possible recruitment of longer term volunteers, the interaction of their teams with local business, usually some good publicity and of course the volunteers helping out.



So is there a downside? Not really. The host will have to put some energy, thought and preparation into a visit (and not every enquiry will pan out), some training of the volunteers may be needed and that might seem too much for a couple of days help but the feedback says otherwise. Find out more at [Employee Volunteering](#) or [Volunteering Matters](#) or [Timebank](#)

Here in Manchester, the Council are [encouraging their staff to apply for up to 3 days volunteering leave](#) a year in order to support them to connect with local communities and bring new skills and resources into the VCSE sector.

Are PIP and ESA assessments working well?

Parliament's Work and Pensions Select Committee has [called for evidence](#) on how the assessment processes for Employment Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payments are handled by Department for Work and Pensions contractors ATOS, Capita and Maximus, and how the application, assessment and appeals processes for these two benefits are working.

The latest data shows that claimants are successful in appealing against a decision in 65% of cases, for both PIP and ESA, and there has been an 29% increase in such appeals being registered since September 2016.

Please consider responding and sharing widely among your clients and networks, as they are calling for evidence from claimants as well as organisations. The deadline for submissions is **November 10th, 2017**.

Movement Builders training

The New Economy Organiser's Network* (NEON) Movement Builders programme is a 5 day intensive training course for people working towards big systemic change. Half theory, half practical tools, this five day course puts you in a room with 30 organisers across your region to think about the role of movements in leading change and learn from the world's most effective groups, leaving you with analysis and tactics to apply to your own organising work. The training will be focused around four core themes: context and analysis; strategy; story and structure.

Dates & Venue: November 24 - 28th, 2017 in central Manchester

Fees range from £0 upwards but are flexible, so for more information or to apply please visit their [website](#)

* NEON is an independent network of activists working for an economy based on social and environmental justice.

Forthcoming events



BE//LONGING is a thought-provoking, immersive, multi-media theatre production, that will shine a spotlight on the findings of the University of Manchester new Migration Lab's research, telling real people's stories of migration. Be//Longing is the flagship production in the Lab's plan to use writing, theatre and live events to inform debate in local, national and global communities to support and communicate its work.

Dates and Venue: Wednesday November 1st - Saturday November 4th at 7.30pm at Hope Mill Theatre

[Further information and book](#)

Are foodbanks a dignified answer to food poverty?

On Thursday November 9th, 2017 from 6 - 8pm at [Bridge 5 Mill](#) 22A Beswick St, Manchester M4 7HR



Is Britain learning the wrong lesson from the US about how to deal with food poverty? Join us as leading American and British authors discuss these questions as well as the future of food charity in the US and the UK.

There will be light refreshments and time for a Q+A discussion. [More info and book](#)



Open Mic Night Fundraiser at The Spoon Inn, Chorlton An evening of music and poetry

On Thursday November 9th, 2017 from 7.30 - 11pm at 364 Barlow Moor Road M21 8AZ

Be entertained and have fun for a just cause - better still, call if you want to perform! [Find out more and book](#)



Don't forget that on Friday November 10th, 2017 the Manchester Sleepout will return, and the Booth Centre would love you to join in. They're asking you to take on the challenge of sleeping out, for one night only, to highlight the hardships faced by the people sleeping rough every night. By taking part you'll help raise vital funds to support homeless people in our community.

[Register now](#)



Sustainability as if people mattered: Local projects, future directions

Thursday November 16th, 2017 from 2.30 - 6.30pm at Islington Mill, 1 James Street, Salford M3 5HW

The Sustainable Housing and Urban Studies Unit is hosting this event featuring research under the unit's Sustainability and Society theme. This workshop and panel discussion will bring together disparate but connected research on health, energy, greenspace and active transport. It will explore the linkages between these themes and identify priorities for future research.

There will be presentations delivered jointly by academic researchers and partners from outside the University. The event will close with a reception and further opportunity for discussion. [More information and book](#)



Any events you'd like GMPA to publicise? [Email us with the details](#)

For more information about Greater Manchester Poverty Action

please visit our [website](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) or visit our [Facebook](#) page.

We want to find new ways of working together, share the network's successes and provide a voice for the people living in poverty in our region. But we can only do this with your help and support.

For more information or to share your news please contact [Chris](#)

Copies of previous newsletters are available on our [website](#)

If you would like to contact us or submit an article for inclusion in a newsletter please get in touch in one of the following ways:

Post: c/o 5th Floor Church House, 90 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GH

Or contact Chris [Email](#) or 07419 774537 and we will reply as soon as possible.

NB GMPA does not have full-time dedicated administrative support so please do not expect an immediate response.

