



SUSTAINABLE EVENTS GUIDE

MAJOR
OUTDOOR EVENTS



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Providing you with the inspiration to plan and manage a sustainable event

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USEFUL **RESOURCES**

Guides and websites to plan your next sustainable outdoor event.

TAILORED GUIDES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR:

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



01

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. 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

	N/A	Already doing		If yes, do we need to improve?	Commit to do	How
	Yes	No				
Use mains power instead of diesel generators (benefits: lower emissions, no local transport, air pollution nor noise issues). If you have to use temporary power (generators), use low or zero carbon power sources (e.g. hybrid or biodiesel generators, solar power).						
If using temporary power (usually via generators), accurately assess power demand to avoid over-specifying generators - either ask power users for e.g. a list of equipment, power ratings and running times, or ask power provider to do this (this could save money)						
Specify energy efficient equipment and controls for the site including e.g. LED flood lighting, timers, sensors						
Provide event staff, traders and contractors with information/training on energy-saving actions						
Put a procedure in place to power down the event site out of hours						
Get readings on event power use from energy / power suppliers – mains and/or temporary power – monitor this to see if you can reduce it (this could save you money)*						
Communicate what we are doing on energy to event-goers						
Further comments						



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

WATER



Make mains water, standpipes or bulk water dispensers* (and refillable bottles) available to e.g. staff/contractors, participants, event goers to avoid single-use disposable bottles/cups.

*Water source preference is mains water, but bowser or tanker deliveries are an option if mains is unavailable

Choose water efficient or waterless toilets (and using biocide free flushing liquid)

Specify water efficient taps and equipment e.g. aerated or push taps

Provide traders and contractors with information/training on water-saving and pollution prevention, including responsible disposal of grey water

Monitor and report event water use*

Communicate what we are doing on water to event-goers

Further comments

	N/A	Already doing		Commit to do	How
		Yes	No		
Make mains water, standpipes or bulk water dispensers* (and refillable bottles) available to e.g. staff/contractors, participants, event goers to avoid single-use disposable bottles/cups.					
*Water source preference is mains water, but bowser or tanker deliveries are an option if mains is unavailable					
Choose water efficient or waterless toilets (and using biocide free flushing liquid)					
Specify water efficient taps and equipment e.g. aerated or push taps					
Provide traders and contractors with information/training on water-saving and pollution prevention, including responsible disposal of grey water					
Monitor and report event water use*					
Communicate what we are doing on water to event-goers					
Further comments					

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

WASTE & CLEANSING



	N/A	Already doing			Commit to do	How
		Yes	No	If yes, do we need to improve?		
Choose waste and/or cleaning contractors which can demonstrate the environmental credentials of both their business and the service offered. See the Waste & Cleaning Services Guide for more information.						
Require waste or cleaning contractors to collect and separate discarded litter on-site where possible to improve recycling rates e.g. if you're expecting a lot of waste on the ground post event						
Provide recycling facilities 'front of house' for event goers - at least plastic bottles, cans and glass – and clear signage						
Provide specific recycling options 'back of house' for traders and contractors e.g. batteries, food waste, used oils and fats or provide information to them to do themselves off site. If taking waste away with them, ask them to report on their event waste volumes, types and disposal.						
Provide event staff, traders and contractors with information/training on waste separation, recycling and reuse						
Tell event-goers, sportspeople, performers etc. what we are doing on waste and what they can do to help						
Require waste /cleaning contractor to carry out checks on waste separation and recycling at the event to avoid contamination of waste streams						
Work with waste contractor to monitor and report total event waste volumes, types and disposal*						
Further comments						

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

TRAVEL



Work with the local transport authority and/or companies and sustainable transport charities or campaigns to provide low or zero carbon transport e.g. shuttle buses, car-sharing, free tram travel

Promote low or zero carbon travel options to event staff, volunteers, participants.

Promote and develop low or zero carbon travel options to event-goers

Provide traders, suppliers and contractors with information on what they can do to minimise transport impacts e.g. optimise route planning and loads, use low emission vehicles

Monitor and report on travel impact by looking at distances travelled and mode of transport to enable carbon footprint calculations*:

- event-related travel for which we pay e.g. staff, performers
- Ask traders, suppliers and contractors to report on transport
- Do an event-goer travel survey or include travel in existing surveys

Book hotels with environmental credentials e.g. Green Tourism award

Further comments

	N/A	Already doing			Commit to do	How
		Yes	No	If yes, do we need to improve?		
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Promote and develop low or zero carbon travel options to event-goers						
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Book hotels with environmental credentials e.g. Green Tourism award						
Further comments						

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

FOOD & DRINK TRADERS



Use traders which can demonstrate sustainable practices e.g. Fair Trade, locally sourced, seasonal, vegetarian, vegan, organic, animal welfare standards or sustainably sourced seafood (as many as possible)
Ideally traders should have NCASS* certification

Ensure event-goers have a choice e.g. vegetarian, vegan, healthy

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Cut the plastic! Ban the use of damaging, single use materials e.g. plastic bags and cups, straws, polystyrene boxes

- Use reusable/washable serveware which could include a cup deposit scheme
- 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
- Support GM's plastic free campaign <https://plasticfreegm.com/>

Provide food and drink traders with information/training on reducing, and recycling 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

	N/A	Already doing		If yes, do we need to improve?	Commit to do	How
		Yes	No			
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Ensure event-goers have a choice e.g. vegetarian, vegan, healthy						
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If food prep done on-site ensure correct separation, storage and disposal of used oils and fats to avoid pollution						
Further comments						

PRODUCTION

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



Sound, Lighting, Vision

Specify the use of energy-efficient equipment e.g. LEDs, tungsten rather than discharge lights, active PAs, low wattage amps						
Ask if rechargeable batteries can be used e.g. for mics						

Other production

Ask suppliers/production designers to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use hired, borrowed, reclaimed or recycled materials rather than buying new Design for ease, reuse and recycling of temporary structures, stands, stages e.g. using standard size, easily dismantled set 						
Specify the use of sustainably sourced wood e.g. Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) certified						
Specify the use of low-impact materials e.g. non-PVC materials, zero or low Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) adhesives and coatings, water-based and low VOC paints						

All production

Ask production companies to report on reuse/recycling, material sourcing and waste disposal						
Other comments						

MARKETING & MERCHANDISE



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	N/A	Already doing			Commit to do	How
		Yes	No	If yes, do we need to improve?		
For event materials (e.g. signs, stands, banners, lanyards) specify the use of sustainable materials and design for reuse or recycling (e.g. Avoid hard-to-recycle materials like plastics, polystyrene and PVC)						
For printed materials, specify the use of recycled, sustainably sourced, un-chlorinated and uncoated paper or card, using water or vegetable based inks						
For t-shirts/other branded clothing, specify the use of Fairtrade and organic textiles printed with water based inks or vegetable dyes						
Work with sponsors to ensure merchandise and give-aways are sustainably and responsibly sourced						
Further comments						

LOCAL COMMUNITIES & ECONOMY



	N/A	Already doing			Commit to do	How
		Yes	No	If yes, do we need to improve?		
Work with local companies and suppliers as much as possible – lowering travel impacts and supporting local economy						
Use the event to raise the profile of local performers, artists, sportspeople, organisations who are sustainability champions, e.g. a super sustainable food trader, commissioning work with an environmental theme/process e.g. recycled displays, costumes, pushing/creating/testing innovative/new green products and services						
Provide volunteering or learning development opportunities for local people either directly or through event partners						
Provide affordable or free tickets for e.g. local people, communities, low-income families						
Undertake specific actions to strengthen links within the community through the event						
Undertake specific actions to strengthen cultural awareness through the event						
Undertake specific actions to increase local pride through the event						
Attract audiences to the event from different communities, interest groups etc.						
Provide attendance and audience profile data to the Council event manager to help estimate the economic impact of the event						
Further comments						

WORK



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	N/A	Already doing			Commit to do	How
		Yes	No	If yes, do we need to improve?		
Provide for the welfare of event staff and volunteers during the event e.g. providing training and inductions, maximum shifts, rest and break facilities, catering, safe travel after hours etc.						
Pay at least Manchester Living Wage to those we employ directly for this event						
Choose traders, suppliers and contractors which pay at least the Manchester Living Wage						
Avoid zero-hour contracts for those we employ directly for this event						
Choose traders, suppliers and contractors which avoid zero-hour contracts						
Further comments						

WHAT YOU ARE DOING AS AN ORGANISATION



POLICY + PRACTICE

	Yes	No	N/A	How
We have a sustainability or environmental policy – if so please provide				
We have an ethical sponsorship policy – which defines the type of activities and companies from which we will not accept sponsorship (on ethical, social, environmental grounds)				
We track our environmental impacts as a business (or at least on this event) on at least an annual basis				
We have received sustainability awards and/or have up-to-date sustainability certifications – if so please let us know which ones				
We actively support specific community projects or charities – if so please let us know which ones				
We pay at least the Manchester Living Wage to everyone we employ and contract directly (not just for this event)				
We require traders, suppliers and contractors to pay at least the Manchester Living Wage to the people they employ and contract (not just for this event)				
Attract audiences to the event from different communities, interest groups etc.				
Provide attendance and audience profile data to the Council event manager to help estimate the economic impact of the event				
We do not use zero hours contracts for the people we employ and contract directly (not just for this event)				
We avoid traders, suppliers and contractors who use zero hours contracts (not just for this event)				

USEFUL GUIDES & WEBSITES

Energy

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

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

Waste & Cleaning

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

Julie's Bicycle [Waste Management in Buildings](#)

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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

Nationwide Caterers Association (NCASS) [Sustainability Tips for Caterers](#)

Suppliers

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

[Scenery Salvage](#)

[Sustainability 101: The Guide to a Greener Festival](#)



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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