

A Jewish Community Manifesto for Greater Manchester

Spring 2017

jlc
jewish leadership council



THE JEWISH
REPRESENTATIVE
COUNCIL OF
GREATER MANCHESTER
AND REGION

Serving, Representing, Uniting, Defending &
Protecting Our Community

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Foreword

The Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester and region will be celebrating its centenary in 2019. For almost 100 years, the Council has been responsible for representing, protecting, uniting, defending and serving the Manchester Jewish community. Rooted within Jewish values, we work across the community regardless of religious, cultural or political affiliations or beliefs, ensuring that Jewish Mancunians have a say over the great city in which they lead their lives.

The Manchester Mayoral elections on 4th May 2017 will mark the beginning of a new era in local politics. For the first time ever, Manchester will have an elected Mayor with wide ranging and far reaching powers. Whoever is elected will have the ability to bring a new agenda to Manchester that will shape the City for many years to come.

Working with the relevant communal agencies we have identified the concerns of Manchester's Jewish community. Moreover, we have created this manifesto to inform both incumbent and prospective politicians of the issues faced by our community. Our clear and concise pledges seek to demonstrate the action that would benefit our community.

The Manchester Jewish community is not immune to the pressures faced by wider society. Locally the burden on housing, social care and community cohesion create challenges that make the relationships between the community and elected politicians crucial. This manifesto will ensure that our elected officials and public servants are understanding and responsive to those challenges.

Our success as a community is tied to that of our neighbours. I am therefore extremely proud of the strong links that have been established with all of the other faith communities across the city. The community led by the Rep Council are determined to deliver a tolerant, cohesive and inclusive Manchester that all communities can enjoy.

The issues raised within this manifesto will require partnership with politicians and community leaders for years to come. We hope this manifesto can serve as a foundation of the work to be done during the election and beyond.

Sharon Bannister
President, Jewish Representative Council
of Greater Manchester.



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Manchester's Jewish Community

Jews have lived in Manchester for nearly 250 years. In the late 18th Century formal community structures were established and ever since the Manchester Jewish community has continued to thrive. Manchester boasts a vibrant and growing Jewish population of around 30,000 which enjoys a wide range of communal institutions such as synagogues, schools, care homes, shops, restaurants and community centres.

The local authorities of Bury and Salford are home to approximately two thirds of the city's Jewish residents. There is also a sizeable Jewish presence in the local authorities of Trafford and Stockport. However, despite the geographical concentration of the Jewish population, the community itself is extremely diverse, across various employment sectors and socio-economic groups.

Between 2001 and 2011 the average size of Jewish households increased from 2.17 to 2.31 but continue to remain smaller than the general population (2.36).

Furthermore, the way in which individuals define as Jewish and observe Judaism varies. A quarter (26%) of Jews describes themselves as "Traditional" and a similar proportion (24%) as "Secular/Cultural". Those describing themselves as "Orthodox" or "Haredi" (i.e. strictly Orthodox) are presently a minority (16%) although this is the fastest growing section of the community. Those who define themselves as Reform/Progressive comprise 18% of Manchester Jewry.¹

In addition, 57% of the Jewish community regularly attends a Friday night meal, and 52% observe Kashrut (Jewish dietary laws) inside their home. This means they keep Kosher inside their homes but may not outside of the house.²

¹ Census 2011

² 2013 NJCS national survey

Education and Young People

Lifelong Jewish learning is a unifying concept across all streams of Judaism and Jewish communities. It manifests itself in Manchester's Jewish schools, multiple youth movements and religious institutions. Education, skills and employment are consistently amongst the community's key concerns. It is therefore no surprise that Jewish primary and secondary schools continue to feature at the top of domestic league tables.

The overwhelming majority of Jewish children attend a Jewish school giving them the opportunity to enjoy a Jewish education rooted in British values and the national curriculum. The community firmly believes that teaching secular and religious studies alongside one another creates balanced well rounded students. The State supported schools pride themselves on being models of best practice, promoting links between schools of all faiths and none, ensuring children understand and appreciate individuals with backgrounds that differ to their own.^{3&4}

However, the demand on Jewish school places continues to outstrip supply and a clear commitment to funding Jewish-based education is needed from local authorities and central government to ensure that the growing population of Jews has the opportunity to attend a Jewish school.

Similarly, the Jewish community's provision for young people is highly developed reaching at least 20,000 young people annually. This also includes over 12 denominational and cross-communal youth groups. This equips young Jews with the skills necessary to be active and contributing members of society.

Pledge 1: To support and champion Jewish schools in Manchester, planning for future continued population growth and greater numbers of Jewish school places.

Pledge 2: To continue providing local authority funding for Jewish youth organisations in their contribution both to the Jewish community and through social action to wider society, and to encourage their continued support by local government and agencies within the city.

³ Jews in the United Kingdom in 2013 JPR

⁴ Jewish Leadership Council Report on Future of Jewish Schools



Community Safety, Cohesion and Antisemitism

Manchester is a vibrant multicultural city, in which all components of the Jewish community rightly play an integral and confident part. The Jewish community is well established across the city and by and large is integrated into the wider fabric of society.

The Jewish community is committed to promoting good relations between different groups in Manchester by proactively preventing tensions, combating racism and violence and promoting tolerance and understanding.

The community congratulates the Government on accepting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition on antisemitism. It is expected that this modern and wide ranging definition on contemporary antisemitism be implemented across the country in all relevant government departments and civil society.

Despite the confidence of the community shown through a multitude of religious and cultural gatherings, the community has longstanding legitimate concerns regarding its security and levels of antisemitism.

The primary threat to the Jewish community comes from terrorism. All residents of Manchester could fall victim to terrorism but

as the attacks in Toulouse (March 2012), Burgas (July 2012), Brussels (May 2014), Paris (January 2015), Copenhagen (February 2015), and there is a specific terrorist threat to Jewish communities worldwide.

Since 2010, the government has supported the Jewish community by providing funding for security at grant maintained Jewish schools. In 2015, this was extended to all Jewish schools and an additional provision was made for the cost of security guarding many communal buildings.⁵

The Community Security Trust (CST) monitoring of antisemitism has recorded a long term rise of incidents since 2000 which includes specific increases associated with antisemitic responses to “trigger” incidents that usually revolve around war in the Middle East.

This increase is keenly felt in Manchester due to large concentrations of Jews and communal buildings. It is exacerbated by the emotional impact of extreme anti-Israel activity such as boycott, divestment and sanction (BDS) campaigns that negatively affect communal life including on university campuses across the city.

One example of such campaigns was the daily demonstrations outside Kedem in

⁵ CST Annual Report 2015

2014, a Jewish owned shop selling Israeli cosmetics. The boycott action attracted overt antisemitism including many recorded incidences of support for the Nazis and prescribed terrorist organisations such as Hamas and Hezbollah. The community is grateful to the Leader and Chief Executive of Manchester City Council who were vocal in their criticism of the protests.

Pledge 3: In light of the increased security threat level to the Jewish community, ensure that combating antisemitism and hate crime in Manchester remains a priority. There should be a continued focus on terrorism prevention and community resilience, and the work of the CST, including the provision of services to support victims of antisemitic hate crime.

Pledge 4: To engage with Jewish communal bodies and stakeholders in projects that deliver inter-community and interfaith relations to encourage tolerance, co-existence and cooperation.





Housing and Planning Policy

The pressure on housing in Manchester continues to be a significant issue for the city's population.

Many young Jews, have been priced out of owning their own home in the community in which they grew up. Geographically, the vast majority of the Jewish community resides in a small part of the city. As a result the availability of housing is low which in turn drives up prices. Young people are therefore being forced to reside a considerable distance away from their local synagogues and their families.

This problem is exacerbated for Orthodox Jews who cannot travel on the Sabbath and other Jewish festivals, as their families and communities are not within walking distance. In addition, if they live outside of the symbolic boundary provided by the *eruv* they are not able to carry belongings or push children in public places leaving them effectively housebound.⁶

Larger families continue to struggle to find accommodation that can adequately house all of their children. In addition, recent changes to welfare provision have added to a challenging financial environment.⁷ In addition, it often proves difficult for larger families to obtain planning permission so they are able to extend their homes. As a result, families are sometimes forced to look for suitable accommodation outside of their community.

This issue is compounded by the fact the cost of renting a home in Manchester rose by 20% in 2015. As a result, it is impossible

for wages to keep up with the cost of renting an adequate home. This inevitably leads to families living in accommodation that does not adequately service their needs. They are also subjected to unscrupulous landlords who take advantage of the lack of available housing for rent.

The Jewish community is proud to champion affordable housing through established organisations like the Manchester Jewish Housing Association and Agudas Housing Association. It is a strongly held belief that affordable housing strengthens communities, regenerates areas and benefits the local economy for all inhabitants. It is also hoped that when new land becomes available, affordable housing organisations will be given priority to purchase and develop the land for the benefit of all local communities.

Pledge 5: To commit to and provide for the specific housing needs of the Jewish community alongside the needs of our non-Jewish neighbours with new affordable housing projects for purchase and rent.

Pledge 6: To ensure that new housing includes houses for larger families located in areas close to community facilities.

Pledge 7: To make planning policy less rigid to allow larger families to extend their homes.

⁶ An Eruv is a symbolic boundary consisting of wires running along steel polls. The simulated boundary extends the domain of a household into public areas permitting activities such as carrying belongings or pushing a pram that would normally be forbidden on the Sabbath.

⁷ Jewish families and Jewish households, JPR

Health and Social Care

Manchester's Jewish community is considered one of the most vibrant and well-established faith groups monitored in the city, but over 40% of the community is over 50, significantly higher than the city's average. In addition, the community has twice the number of people over 60 compared to the general UK population. Manchester Jewry has always taken great pride in looking after its elderly members but current demographic trends create certain challenges.⁸

The majority of Jewish Mancunians entering long-term care prefer to access services from Jewish providers such as The Fed located at Heathlands Village. Through extensive fundraising and mergers with other communal health and social care organisations, The Fed has managed to create a one-stop shop where all elements of care including mental health services are made available in tune with religious and cultural sensitivities.

At present, Jewish care homes are only located in Salford and Bury with a new facility being built in Trafford. It is sometimes the case that other local authorities are reluctant to contribute to the care of a resident when he or she chooses to leave local authority social care in search of a culturally sensitive provider.

Despite the impressive redevelopment of Heathlands Village and the drive to rationalise resources to cut expenditure, services continue to be under-funded by local authorities in Manchester. The community

itself continues to fundraise but a combination of ever-increasing costs and dwindling state support has caused severe funding gaps for social care providers both inside and outside the Jewish community.

This is a cross-communal issue and representatives of the Jewish community would welcome a discussion on "fair fees" with all other care homes as to how the £6 billion gap between social care funding and demand can be reduced. The sector is committed to continuing to build constructive relationships with statutory partners regarding future initiatives.⁹

Pledge 8: To ensure the increased costs associated with specialist Jewish social care provision are recognised in relation to state funding whilst also reviewing the support given by local authorities to all care providers.

Pledge 9: To monitor and ensure that all councils who accepted the raised a 2% social care precept on council tax ring-fence this money to be used solely for social care.

⁸ Jews in the United Kingdom in 2013, JPR

⁹ Adult social care funding 2014 state of the nation report LGA

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Culture, Heritage and Social Action

Jewish culture in Manchester continues to thrive and makes a significant contribution to the lives of those both inside and outside of the community.

The Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in the old Jewish neighbourhood of Cheetham Hill has long stood as the Manchester Jewish Museum. It is the only Jewish museum outside London and is housed in the oldest surviving synagogue building in Manchester, completed in 1874. The venue has in recent history attracted celebrities like Howard Jacobson and Maureen Lipman. At present, the museum is undergoing a multimillion pound extension and facelift by award-winning architects. When completed, this will serve as an interactive space where people from all walks of life can come and learn about the historical and contemporary Manchester Jewish community.

The community supports the desire for public events and festivals to deliver engagement between people with different faiths. One of the most iconic annual images of Manchester is the public Menorah lighting in Albert Square surrounded by the Christmas Markets. In addition, Manchester City Council has supported Sukkah in the Square where people of all faiths can come and learn about the festival of Sukkot.

2017 also marks the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. This historic document provided government support for the establishment of the modern State of Israel in the Jewish people's spiritual homeland. The Manchester Jewish community is proud that the architect of modern day Zionism and first President of Israel, Chaim Weizmann, lived in

the city and lectured in Chemistry at Manchester University. The community will be hosting a series of events open to people of all faiths to celebrate this unique occasion and calls on the entire city to take part in the celebrations.

Jews also have a long history of playing an integral part in supporting both religious and cultural aspects of the Jewish faith through volunteering. This commitment to volunteering presents a great opportunity to adopt a larger focus on the idea of a shared volunteer community made up of different faiths. This promotes understanding of other faiths and creates an environment in which faith-based organisations enrich communal culture. The Jewish community in Manchester and beyond is proud to be spearheading the integration of Syrian refugees in addition to setting up a communal foodbank utilised by needy people irrespective of race or religion.

Pledge 10: To ensure faith-based bodies and events that celebrate Jewish culture and history in Manchester, such as the public Menorah lighting and Sukkah in the Square, are fully-supported.

Pledge 11: To endorse, encourage and support Jewish charities engaged in promoting inter-community, interfaith relationships and social action within the city and where appropriate their funding and other support by local government and other agencies within the city.

Pledge 12: To ensure that the Jewish community and its history has a place within a Culture Strategy for Greater Manchester.



About us

The Jewish Leadership Council

The Jewish Leadership Council is a Jewish charity which brings together the major British Jewish organisations to work for the good of the British Jewish community.

The JLC, through our members, works to ensure the continuity in the UK, in this and future generations, of a mainstream Jewish Community that is vibrant and vital, safe and secure, assured of its place within British society, proud of our Jewish identity and culture & confident in our support for Israel.

The Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester

The Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester & Region (JRC) is the lay body representing the Jewish Communities from Blackpool to Stoke. It works daily to defend, protect and promote the best interests of our communities. The JRC promotes harmonious community relations with all sectors and communities, to help support Jewish Education, Heritage, Culture and communities to work for the benefit of society in general.

The JLC works with The Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester to provide a strong voice for Jewish communities across Manchester and the North West.

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