The Viable Economy

.... and Society

Steady State Manchester

steadystatemanchester.net
The Viable Economy ... and Society

The Viable Economy (2014) was by Mark H Burton, Benjamin Irvine and Judith Emanuel, with input from Maurice Barnes. This second edition, The Viable Economy ... and Society, is by Mark H Burton with input from those who came to a series of three reading group sessions in 2019. Special thanks are due to Carolyn Kagan (who also wrote the section on care and caring), Peter Somerville, Roger Bysouth and James S Vandeventer.

About this pamphlet.

This pamphlet is part of a series of publications from Steady State Manchester: reports, pamphlets, articles and blog posts. It is an introduction to a different way of organising society and its economy so that it provides for all our needs without storing up problems for the future, undermining the very basis for the viability of the ecosystem, society and economy. That is, a society that meets human need without overstepping the limits imposed by the planetary and ecological systems\(^1\). It sets out the key themes, making contrasts with the way that existing society and economy are organised. As such it is a conceptual document. It contains a fair amount of theory but also with some indications of practical reforms. It is not a political strategy, nor a road map or economic plan. There is a need for such things: the reader is invited to consider what they would look like. A partial answer is given in our sister publication, Policies for the City Region.

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1) Introduction: Why the Viable Economy?

We want to live in a world that is viable, rather than one that risks tipping into decline or crisis: that means an economy that is resilient and dynamic, providing enough for all, while supporting social well-being. And it must be ecologically viable, not causing further damage to the earth's fragile systems without which life is not possible.

We are using this title, Viable Economy ... and Society, both to give a positive message (rather than the negative, but necessary steady-state one) and to emphasise the need to align the economic, the social and the ecological. No economy can survive that is not viable in all three domains. In Section 2, What is the Viable Economy, we explain that our analysis and concern is not solely with “the economy”. Indeed we are critical of approaches that reduce everything to the economic.

As we will see, the economy and society we have are not viable in
any sense, and so we set out the principles for a viable local and regional economy and society and suggest some positive policies that could be implemented to take us in the right direction.

In what follows our focus moves from level to level, from the local to the global. This is inevitable given the issues we are discussing, that have local manifestations and global interconnections and causes. However, we have written from the perspective of the Greater Manchester region – often described as a City Region. The economy, society, and indeed ecology of this region are, as elsewhere, a historical product of human activity. It has changed over the years from a largely rural one, to an industrial urban one, and then to a de-industrialised and still urban one. Just as our city and region have changed over the years, they need to change again to secure a viable economy, society and ecology. And again they can change as a result of human activity, consciously directed to ecological, social and economic well-being, not just for our people, but for the whole planet.

Finally, it should be clear that unlike standard approaches that emphasise competition in the global economy, we are not pursuing regional self interest, forgetting people in other regions and lands. All regions need to adopt a relatively more self reliant approach, collaborating with each other to achieve that, to reduce the unhealthy type of interdependence that comes with globalisation.

This pamphlet is not the end of the story. Steady State Manchester continues to work on the implications of the model we present for various sectors of our society and economy, collaborating with others in that ambitious task.
The economy is part of society, which itself can only exist within the ecosystems of the natural world. However, the economy also directly impacts on, and depends on, the ecosystem\(^2\).

**The mess we’re in**

We really are in an economic, social and ecological mess. Some aspects of this are particularly bad in our city and in the UK, but many of the dimensions are found worldwide, a result of the domination – the colonisation – of people and planet by the capitalist system.

**The ecological mess**

Most fundamental is the state of extreme ecological malaise affecting all regions of the earth. By 'ecological' we mean not just the living systems of the earth but also the geophysical dimensions of water, atmosphere and minerals and the systems that connect them to one another with the mediation of the earth's life-forms (hence carbon, water, phosphorous and other cycles). It is all these

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systems that are being progressively destroyed, as a direct consequence of human 'economic' activity, whereby our ecological footprint by far exceeds the available carrying capacity of the planet\(^3\): that's the real deficit.

The problem is most starkly apparent in terms of the global heating caused by the ever increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as a result of burning fossil fuels, industrial processes such as making concrete and steel, and land use change, for example from deforestation and the loss of wetlands. The earth is on a course to catastrophic rises in temperature\(^4\). But climate change is just one of the “planetary boundaries” that are being breached: biodiversity loss, damage to phosphorous and nitrogen cycles, climate change and land use are now all in or beyond the ‘uncertainty zone’ which could mean “non-linear, possibly abrupt and irreversible earth system responses” with disastrous consequences all round\(^5\).

“Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history — and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely.... We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.... ...global goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability cannot be met by current trajectories, and goals for 2030 and beyond may only be achieved through transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors.”

IPBES (2019)\(^6\)

The planet's human systems “are using natural resources at a level


\(^4\) See for example, https://tinyurl.com/ipccrpt https://tinyurl.com/ydcpwg9g https://climateactiontracker.org/global/temperatures/


never seen before. The total amount of 70 billion tonnes of raw material extraction is unprecedented, and per-capita levels of resource consumption are at their highest level in history. These numbers are predicted to rise unless stringent reduction targets and policies are put in place.”

Put another way, the UK’s ecological footprint already exceeds the capacity of the planet to regenerate, by a factor of 2.85, and globally it’s around 1.5 – that's like living as if we had one and a half planets, nearly twice that in the case of the UK.

“At the most abstract, the problem we face can be stated very simply. Every 1% added to global GDP over the last century has meant, on average, adding 0.5% to carbon dioxide emissions. As the size of the world economy has grown, so too has the pressure it places on our ecosystems. The consequences of that pressure are now becoming all too apparent. …. On current trends we are heading for a 3.5 degree celsius increase in global temperatures this century; a rise that would wreck everyone’s economy. This isn’t only about climate change. Other fundamental natural systems are at risk.”

John McDonnell, 2017

As the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2014 has shown, it is economic growth that is responsible for the most immediately threatening increases in greenhouse gas emissions that threaten runaway global warming. And climate change is just one of the 'planetary boundaries' that humanity is crossing, or approaching.

The social mess

The social mess, although stemming in large part from the

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10 IPCC http://report.mitigation2014.org/spm/ipcc_wg3_ar5_summary-for-policymakers_approved.pdf page 8

economic mess, also affects the non-economic dimensions of our lives together. Moreover, some of its aspects, for example the structures of domination, exclusion, gender and racial discrimination and domination, are not reducible entirely to economic relations. Some of the signature characteristics include social exclusion, both of social groups and whole geographical areas\textsuperscript{12}, the dissatisfaction with everyday life (that according to some studies ceased improving in the richer countries in the mid 1960s\textsuperscript{13}, and is higher in the UK than in places with far lower material prosperity\textsuperscript{14}), cynicism and disengagement from the political process, and the shift over the last few decades from identities that were more collective, interconnected and co-operative to ones that are more individual, fragmented and apolitical, with an upsurge in xenophobia. This is apparent in both personal and collective 'ill-being', with widespread feelings of pointlessness and insecurity, and high levels of stress, anxiety disorders, depression and addictions, and all this despite levels of consumption that are incompatible with planetary and ecosystem stability. Rising inequality in turn creates rising levels of insecurity and most worrying, a lack of social solidarity – the very basis for our shared\textsuperscript{15} life. Indeed it is perhaps no surprise that words such as 'conviviality', 'solidarity' or 'stewardship' can sound quaint, of another time and place.

**The economic mess**

We have an economy that is subject to the shocks that arise from its dependence on endless growth, its continual accumulation. That makes it unsustainable, in its own economic terms: a system whose 'design' is to continually increase capital meets contradictions that are then addressed by a series of 'fixes' that only postpone further contradictions, leading to further crashes. Keynesian demand-management, the neoliberal curtailment of hard won social dividends\textsuperscript{16}, and speculative ventures via financial engineering or building booms are all examples. Indeed, stagnation has haunted the economy since the 1970s. However the belief that growth is


\textsuperscript{14} \url{https://happyplanetindex.org/}


\textsuperscript{16} Milanovic, B. (2019, March 25). The apogee of capitalism and our political malaise. *Social Europe website*: \url{https://www.socialeurope.eu/our-political-malaise}

\url{http://bit.ly/1gLcgjH}
essential makes it difficult for us to imagine that we can live well without it. Economic justice (let alone economic democracy\textsuperscript{17}) is forever postponed, marginalised or reduced in the futile attempt to stoke up the accumulative process as we can see with current austerity policies. In the period from 1945 until the 1970s, a State-moderated capitalism succeeded in raising the standard of living of a relatively large proportion of people, especially in Western countries. But real incomes have declined in the West since then, and while many in the majority world have escaped poverty, others have become increasingly poor\textsuperscript{18}. However promoters of economic growth continue to suggest that where there is growth, prosperity will trickle down, as crumbs from the table of the advantaged. The consequences include increasing inequality, instability and repeated. While the division of labour accelerates, there is no benefit in terms of reduced working hours. Just as Margaret Thatcher advocated, the 'economic' comes to dominate social thinking and decision-making, with politics, and even culture, reduced to economic activity, with the emphasis on profit and the free market.

The high rates of economic growth, and the accumulation of exchange value as capital that underpins it, although dependent on labour exploitation, would not be possible without highly concentrated and historically cheap energy sources, predominantly fossil fuels\textsuperscript{19}. With the depletion of the easier to exploit fossil fuel reserves, the cost of extracting and distributing energy rises\textsuperscript{20}. The consequent reducing energy return on investment increasingly threatens the capitalist growth model, making it unviable\textsuperscript{21}.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Economic democracy places economic decision-making, not solely with property owner, shareholders and managers but with a wider group of people with stakes in the economy including workers, customers, suppliers and citizens, for example through workers co-ops, employee ownership, participatory budgeting, and consultation on strategic economic policies.
\end{itemize}
That then is the nature of the problem. Our conception of the viable economy and society is not something we have just dreamed up, but a way of bringing together a number of streams of thinking and practice into a coherent framework.

2) What is the Viable Economy?

Now, more than ever before, there is an urgent need to think differently about the economy, to link it firmly and inseparably to environmental, climate and biodiversity issues and to social justice. We cannot carry on as we are if we are to achieve human flourishing on a safe and protected earth.

Our title is *The Viable Economy ... and Society* because we are just as concerned with the cultural and political sphere as the economic. So we promote not just an alternative economics but a critique of 'economic rationality', the dominance of the economy and of the domination of economic criteria in determining government policy and law, as well as the practices and policies of more local actors.

While for purposes of analysis and explanation it is legitimate to refer to "the economy", it should not be assumed that it has either a priority over, or an existence separate from, that of people living their lives (in all their private, community-rooted, economic and political ways) and the fundamental ecological and planetary systems. More than economic, our concern is with both "political economy", which recognises relations, interests and forces of power, and "ecological economy", which understands economic life as embedded in and transacting with, the ecosystem.

For this reason we do indeed use terms like solidarity, conviviality and stewardship to identify and promote an alternative set of values and principles for a seamless economic, social, political, cultural and ecological framework, which we call here the Viable Economy.

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22 These strands include Ecological Economics, Keynesian economic theory, the Marxist critique of political economy, decolonial and liberation theory, critical social policy, cultural studies and permacultural thinking. However we also use more orthodox approaches, for example those from welfare economics and law to support our analyses.

23 Gorz, A. (2010). *Critique of Economic Reason*. London: Verso. Before the widespread adoption of the label “neoliberalism”, “economic rationalism” was the term used in Australia to refer to that intellectual and policy framework.
### Key features of the Viable Economy:

#### Ecologically viable
- Radically reducing both the exploitation of finite resources and the emission of pollutants, including greenhouse gases: a one-planet economy.
- Based on production and consumption for need: a frugal abundance.
- More security for us all because nature and the environment is protected from further destruction.
- Resilient to climactic and other ecological shocks.
- Respecting and conserving the myriad life-forms of the planet (of which humans are but one), their habitats, and the web of their interconnections.
- An economy that practices stewardship of the natural world that we depend on.

#### Socially viable
- Control over the economy rather than the economy controlling us.
- An economy that relies on and builds equality, solidarity and cooperation among people, here and elsewhere.
- An economy that rather than increasing inequality, progressively becomes more equitable.
- Less exploitation of the majority world while keeping open channels for communication and learning globally.
- An economy founded on stewardship of human and social capital, that does not waste people's energies and talents, that includes everyone.
- With an increased space for non-commercial transactions: the collaborative or solidarity economy.

#### Economically viable
- An economy that is resilient in the face of bubbles, crashes, supply chain interruptions and the whim of national governments.
- More money staying local and more democratic and local control over savings and investment.
- An economy that delivers (and measures) what we need rather than growth for growth’s sake.
- A balanced economy without the hyper-development of some sectors (e.g. financial speculation, armaments).
- An economy that does not have to keep expanding, although where some sectors will grow, (e.g. renewable energy) and some must shrink (e.g. fossil fuels).
- Where needed investment comes from within rather than from exploitation of other peoples or as profit-seeking from external investors.
3) About Growth

The problem

The way our economy is organised at present is unviable because it depends on endlessly growing in size to sustain itself and maintain a semblance of social stability. This growth, at a preferred three percent per year, is exponential, growing like compound interest. Three per cent per year would mean an economy that doubles in size every 27 years, or increases eight-fold in an average Western lifetime. It is not surprising that critics of economic growth liken it to the pathological growth of a tumour, rather than healthy growth that reaches a natural limit.

This requirement for infinite growth is ecologically unviable: there is no evidence that it is possible for economic activity to be separated (decoupled) from the amount of energy and physical material moving through the global economy. It is therefore incompatible with the finite nature of the planet and the environmental resources which support human life, depending on the destruction of ecological abundance and the capture of value from regions of the majority world.

A further problem is that growth in the material economy, while often seen as necessary in order to alleviate poverty, has in recent times led to the concentration of wealth and thereby to increasing inequality.

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Also see our own work, specifically on the decoupling of carbon emissions from GDP growth: [https://steadystatemanchester.net/?s=decoupling](https://steadystatemanchester.net/?s=decoupling)


The viable alternative

A viable economy requires that we re-design the economy to ensure economic activity is based on what is socially useful while restoring and maintaining ecological assets. The fudges of 'good growth' and 'green growth' are not sufficient; the viable economy is only ecologically viable when it is able to function without growing in overall size. In fact, it is necessary to actually shrink the material flows of energy and resources flowing through the global economy, and that means shrinkage of its scale here in Manchester and the UK too27.

The viable alternative is socially preferable. Real increases in productivity and technological improvements must be better shared as real improvements in quality of life. This includes reductions in working time and increasing opportunities to undertake activities that need not make a profit but have value for individuals and communities. Ecological economists have modelled these policy choices under post-growth scenarios and conclude that they are feasible28.

Some viable policy ideas

Many aspects of the unviable economy require radical reform at the national and international level: campaigning on those fronts is essential to change the context in which the local economy operates. But there are policy options for regions such as Greater Manchester to pursue a more viable economic path, and in doing so to both prefigure the change required and develop resilience to likely future economic shocks and energy scarcity. These are covered in the following sections where we review each key aspect of the viable economy in turn.

27 This paragraph refers to the material scale of the economy: this is not necessarily the same as the scale of its monetary value, although as we see from the decoupling literature referred to above, the two are very closely linked.


4) About Resilience

The problem

Our unviable economy is not resilient. Consider its “too big to fail” monopolies, 'just in time' supply chains, and the reliance on oil inputs.

Economically, it goes in cycles of boom and bust, most recently in the form of unsustainable credit and property bubbles. For our food, energy and other goods, we rely on long and vulnerable supply chains, often with high levels of carbon emissions.

Socially, it simultaneously over-works and over-rewards some while rendering others 'surplus to requirements' and condemning them to a life of poverty and desperation. This damages everyone's mental and physical health. Others are overworked and under-rewarded.

Ecologically, it requires ever increasing resources and production of waste, making the planet an unsafe place to live.

Taken together this means we have limited ability to withstand and recover from various kinds of systemic shocks. The shocks could be

- ecological – for example from slowly or rapidly changing climate affecting our food sources; for example, see https://medium.com/insurge-intelligence/wests-dust-bowl-future-now-locked-in-as-world-risks-imminent-food-crisis-947f50eca712
- economic - for example from sudden 'melt-downs' of the global financial system that enables international trade;
- political – for example from wars, industrial action or actions by energy- exporting countries (as happened in the 1970s with the OPEC oil price shock).

We believe that, as a result of these “geopolitical risks”, our population is far more vulnerable than it appears from its apparent prosperity. The collapse of our social, economic and ecological support systems is something that we have to face as a real possibility.

In our city region, as in many others, the trend in settlement and building patterns has often been to reduce resilience. Concentrating economic development in “growth hubs”, for example, builds in a reliance on mass transit to get people from home to work. While there are arguments for increasing urban

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30 As happened in the 1970s with the OPEC oil price shock.
density (reducing travel times and energy expenditure), this has usually meant building on any parcel of green space, including on “brownfield” sites that have returned to nature, recreational spaces and areas prone to (the increasing) risk of flooding. With rising temperatures, the building boom in city centres, with its millions of tons of glass, steel and concrete, increases the risk to residents and workers from the extreme heat waves that will increase in frequency this century.

**The viable alternative**

A viable economy and society place the values and practices of *stewardship* at their core. This means treating the earth's resources not as something to be extracted and consumed, but as something to be looked after while borrowed. The same goes for human resources – people are not born to be exploited, nor to consume but to live meaningful and satisfying lives in social harmony and solidarity. In rebuilding our social and economic systems the viable alternative seeks to use the principles of ecological resilience.

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**Ecological principles of resilience**

Resilience is defined as the capacity of a system, community or individual to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change, so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks. This depends on at least four dimensions including:

* **Diversity** – the variation within the system. A field of one crop is more vulnerable to pest attack than a field of mixed crops.

* **Modularity** – the extent to which the system is broken up into relatively autonomous subsystems. The size and interdependence of financial institutions intensified the impact of the banking crash of 2008.

* **Tightness and damping of feedbacks** – the speed with which the system can respond to disturbance without over-compensating.

* **Redundancy** – the extent to which the system has duplication of elements. If you are growing one lettuce and the slugs get it, you have no lettuce. If you have several plants you can afford to lose one.

However, the resilience of human settlements and their economies also depends on their social relations, which cannot be reduced to

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the economic. It is the values and practices of mutuality, cooperation and solidarity that make for an economically resilient society.

In the face of possible collapse, the idea of “a better collapse” is something that should be taken seriously\textsuperscript{33}. Voluntary and planned downsizing of the material economy would be preferable but should it be, as seems highly possible, involuntary, then having worked in advance to increase resilience will have been worth the effort. A relative re-ruralisation\textsuperscript{34} of our cities and lives is likely to take place spontaneously if food supplies get interrupted: making re-ruralisation happen proactively would help prepare settlements for such shock conditions.

**Some viable policy ideas**

- There are various initiatives that point the way to more resilient futures, from the work done in Preston and other places under the heading “Community Wealth Building” to the re-ruralisation of suburbia envisaged by permaculture practitioners\textsuperscript{35}.
- Reduce our demand for food, energy and other resource use through cutting out waste, increasing product life, re-using and recycling, developing incentives and sanctions to support all these things.
- Shorten supply chains by producing more of our food, energy, clothes and other requirements more locally.
- Radically increase the rate of retrofitting of buildings to reduce fuel demand.
- Devise collective energy purchase schemes that incentivise


\textsuperscript{34} The Steady State Manchester team. (2018, May 22). We need a A Social-Ecological Spatial Framework. Steady State Manchester. \url{https://steadystatemanchester.net/2018/05/22/we-need-a-a-social-ecological-spatial-framework/}


lower unit levels of energy use.

- Work to help people identify less in terms of material possessions and more in terms of a culture where conviviality is central.

- Teach, demonstrate and incentivise the practices of stewardship – for example the repair of clothes and electrical equipment, and food growing.

- Support (technically, politically, economically) local communities to plan and manage their own regeneration, increasing people’s stake while shortening the chain from the emergence of problems to their solution.

- Incentivise cooperation – for example in the award of grants for community amenity improvements and business development.

- Promote practical research on increasing the diversity of our food resources\(^ {36} \).

- Beyond all this, cumulatively retrofit the city region as a re-ruralised or “Rurban” space, where food production is local and integrated with human settlement\(^ {37} \). Whether planned or not, this trajectory is probably inevitable under impending conditions of energy and materials scarcity\(^ {38} \). The next section is relevant to this idea.

5) **About Space**

**The problem**

The unviable economy is organised globally. Weaker economies suffer as the stronger ones raid their assets and concentrate wealth, while encouraging a race to the bottom. Resources are wasted in transporting goods across the globe in the endless search for cheaper labour, materials and new markets. Communities, livelihoods and ecosystems in the Global South are devastated by mining, fossil fuel extraction and industrial scale farming with huge chemical inputs. Our local economy is unbalanced, producing little

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\(^{36}\) “There are over 20,000 species of edible plants in the world yet fewer than 20 species now provide 90% of our food.” [http://www.pfaf.org/user/AboutUs.aspx](http://www.pfaf.org/user/AboutUs.aspx)


but chasing the chimeras of competition in the global market or obtaining a portion of China's boom. This means an economy that has to keep expanding, the simultaneous increase of extremes of wealth and poverty, locally and globally, and the wrecking of the ecosystems we rely on. Meanwhile, local space is controlled and owned by powerful sectional interests, with less and less of it available for use by the public. The distinctiveness of places diminishes as everywhere begins to look the same, with the same corporate chains and brands and the same building styles dominating.

The viable alternative

The viable economy and society use the concept of strategic localism\(^\text{39}\) which means that things that can be sourced locally should be. An example: there are over 3,000 varieties of English apple, that with appropriate storage, can provide fruit for some nine months of the year. Yet most apples are imported, from as far away as Chile and New Zealand. Or take clothes. It seems bizarre that in the former textile capital of the world, our clothes are imported at great environmental cost, from low wage economies, while our economy has no place for thousands of semi-skilled workers. This means not just playing to the strengths of local economies but actively building those strengths. It does not mean turning our back on the world; there has been selective trade over long distances for millennia. It does mean keeping it in proportion with the planet's capacities, and playing a responsible part in the world while becoming locally more self-sufficient.

Spaces need to be designed to support a more sufficient and convivial way of living. Wise spatial planning would reduce the need for people to move about for work, leisure, shopping. There are frameworks to guide this, from the Permaculture concept of zones\(^\text{40}\), to alternative models such as Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes and Garden Cities\(^\text{41, 42}\), or the Twenty Minute Neighbourhood pioneered in Portland and Melbourne\(^\text{43}\).

\(^{39}\) Or “trade subsidiarity" [http://greendealmanchester.wordpress.com/about/](http://greendealmanchester.wordpress.com/about/)


\(^{41}\) [https://steadystatemanchester.net/2017/03/07/greater-manchester-towards-a-retrofit-garden-city/](https://steadystatemanchester.net/2017/03/07/greater-manchester-towards-a-retrofit-garden-city/) and [https://steadystatemanchester.net/2018/05/22/we-need-a-social-ecological-spatial-framework/](https://steadystatemanchester.net/2018/05/22/we-need-a-social-ecological-spatial-framework/)

\(^{42}\) For one example see [http://www.city-analysis.net/2011/03/30/the-urbal-fix-creating-truly-sustainable-cities/](http://www.city-analysis.net/2011/03/30/the-urbal-fix-creating-truly-sustainable-cities/)

\(^{43}\) [https://steadystatemanchester.net/2019/11/20/the-future-is-20-minutes-away-20-minute-neighbourhoods/](https://steadystatemanchester.net/2019/11/20/the-future-is-20-minutes-away-20-minute-neighbourhoods/)
This means advocating for and establishing a diversity of green spaces, accessible to everyone, thereby strengthening resilience, moderating temperatures, contamination and rainwater run-off, providing for food production and amenity.

Finally it means living in greater knowledge of our own wider bioregion, including the city's rural and semi-rural hinterland, its strengths, its delights and its vulnerabilities.\(^{44}\)

**Some viable policy ideas**

- Develop an alternative spatial plan to transform Greater Manchester into a new kind of “rurban” city and bioregion where everyone is within easy reach of productive, recreational and living spaces, while improving the eco-efficiency of this large settlement, integrating land use under a comprehensive spatial strategy.

- Support calls for greater devolution of powers to the City Region, but at the same time insist on the redefinition of the city region in bio-regional terms. This would include the countryside around the more built up areas and should link to a planning system which supports conservation and local supply chains.\(^{45}\)

- Improve transport infrastructure within the city region while reducing or stopping investment in those elements (motorways, airport, High Speed Rail, shipping terminals) that act as resource drains and big emissions generators. Use the transport hierarchy seriously. One version ranks the various kinds of transport in descending order of priority: walking>cycling>public transport>taxis>goods transport>private motorised transport. The version in the diagram identifies a hierarchy of action for improving the transport infrastructure.\(^{46}\)

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44 See [http://greendealmanchester.wordpress.com/the-manchester-bioregion/](http://greendealmanchester.wordpress.com/the-manchester-bioregion/)


Focus on the relatively resilient ‘foundational economy’\(^\text{47}\): essential goods and services such as infrastructure, utilities, food processing, retailing and distribution, and health, education and welfare, reducing emphasis on those development projects that bring little benefit to the viability of economy or society while incurring significant ecological costs.

A related concept is that of ‘Community Wealth Building’, as explored in Preston and other places, building on the role of “Anchor Institutions” to capture financial flows\(^\text{48}\). Anchor institutions need not be confined to the traditional ‘eds and med’ (universities, colleges and hospitals) but can include community anchors, local, independent civil society organisations.

Develop locally and regionally based financial institutions that

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support saving, credit and investment locally, with clear ethical priorities for strengthening the green and social economy.\textsuperscript{49}

- Support community-led renewable energy production along the lines of the Danish and German models, in which ownership and involvement throughout the development of schemes have helped build wider public engagement with energy security and climate change issues.\textsuperscript{50}

- Assert the value of public space and the commons by increasing the area that is open for non-commercial use by the public and reforming land-ownership with a view to redistribution to small owners and not-for profit enterprises and where possible bringing assets into community ownership and stewardship where possible. Make available unused public space for use by small businesses and cooperatives on a usufruct\textsuperscript{51} basis.

6) About Democracy and Ownership

\textit{The problem}

The dominance of current economic thinking has succeeded in depoliticising economic policy so it became not a political choice, facilitated and administered by legislatures and international governance arrangements, but an unshakeable 'market reality'. This is associated with the problem of State Capture, whereby corporations exert power over the political process, at local and national levels.\textsuperscript{52} This situation has increased the gap between the architects of social policy and those who are the object of those policies.

Particularly in the UK, what were once public utilities and resources (e.g. buses, water supply and sanitation, much housing, railways, postal services and telecommunications, social care) have been turned over to private ownership. Although some of this ownership is in the hands of organisations such as pension funds, in which many citizens have a stake, the scope for democratic control has


\textsuperscript{50} See \url{http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/aug/10/denmark-renewable-wind-farm-energy} and \url{http://bit.ly/1pM0sSF} and for an analysis of the UK’s dysfunctional energy market this IPPR report \url{http://bit.ly/10PSJ3u}

\textsuperscript{51} Usufruct is the right to continue using the land while certain conditions – e.g. ecological stewardship and productivity, are met. See \url{https://solutions.thischangeseverything.org/#module/usufruct}

reduced greatly. The dependence of resources meant for collective benefit, such as pensions, on the vagaries of the stock-market, is unhealthy.

The Great Financial Crash of 2008 exposed the contradictory patterns of ownership and the lack of democratic control; the bank bailouts involved continuing privatization of profits but the socialization of losses. Despite the State holding a majority share in the Royal Bank of Scotland, it has missed the opportunity to turn it into an institution that can invigorate local sustainable economies.

While there are fields of professional and scientific expertise, too often, the relationship between experts and citizens has become lopsided. National politics too, has increasingly become the preserve of a professionalised class, a political elite, complete with non-elected advisers, revolving doors to the media, the financial sector, and the (mostly neo-liberal) think tanks. These distortions have been exploited by the populist right, in alliance with sections of the power elite itself, as seen in the case of the UK referendum on leaving the European Union and its aftermath.

However, the problem is not solely one of neoliberalism: the post-war economic model of managed capitalism, although more benign, is also unviable as a model for social, economic and ecological well-being in a world of global super-exploitation and ecological collapse.

**The viable alternative**

In the viable economy and society, economic and political levers are in the hands of the people, not the elite. So economics and national economic policy are re-politicised and democratised, with technical experts supporting meaningful processes of public participation rather than short-circuiting them. Some idea of what this might look like can be seen in experiments in Brazil and elsewhere on participatory budgeting, and the newer radical municipalist movement in places such as Barcelona, Grenoble, Valparaiso and, nearer to home, Frome. However, the change needs to go further.

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than that with political and economic education, breaking the monopoly of knowledge, and facilitating critical thinking.

The viable economy is democratic, ending the private control of the strategic sectors of the economy, including the utilities and banks. Democracy extends not just to the public sector, but also to the private economic realm.

Underpinning all this is a re-affirmation of the “public good”, not as some abstract idea, used to legitimate domination, but as a good sense basis for democratically arrived policy, close to notions of “common weal(th)” or “right livelihood”. And closely linked to this is the reaffirmation of the “Public Realm”, rather than the market or the (paternalist) State, as central to a good society.

**Some viable policy ideas**

- Democratise corporations, with reforms to legislation on governance so that there is a required community and worker bloc. Make it a duty of companies to maximise environmental and social benefit through their operations.
- End the “done deal” approach to planning and consultation, involving citizens and community groups early in the planning and policy process, before proposals are formulated and “set in concrete”. This and the subsequent suggestions require proper resourcing, if community actors, especially in stressed and resource-poor sectors, are to make a meaningful contribution.
- Develop models for deliberative decision-making where expert and citizen perspectives are brought together to calmly consider policy dilemmas and their solution.
- Establish programmes of economic and financial education and training, for example with proven models like Large Group Capacitation and the Organisational Workshop.

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59 Models include Citizens' Assemblies and Citizens' Juries.


- Develop and support co-operatives and other forms of mutual and common ownership and not-for-profit enterprise.
- Invest in public (social) housing, ending the risky wager on excessive borrowing and asset price inflation as the route to prosperity and life satisfaction.

7) About Investment, Money, Credit and Debt.

The problem

Investment is crucial to the way economies develop over time; we invest funds today in order to build up the sources of future prosperity.

The way in which investment functions, where it goes and what activities it supports, determines the type of economy we will have.

Currently, dominant thinking about investment neither reflects the realities of the money system nor the use of the surplus produced by the economy. This has some practical consequences.

1) In order to attract external investment into both the national and regional economies, whilst wages are driven down 'to compete with cheap labour economies', there is an effort to increase the skills and "productivity" of the workforce. In the capitalist market, investment is only done to realise a profit. That means the extraction of exchange value from the economy into which investment is made. It thereby tends to contribute to declining real incomes. The emphasis on skills instrumentalises and narrows education so it solely serves economic interests, thereby destroying it as a means of human development.

2) Meanwhile, as the average rate of profit tends to fall over time (a process which is not uniform due to the influence of several countervailing processes)\textsuperscript{62}, the real, productive economy is increasingly unattractive to investors, and profits are misdirected to speculative, unproductive activities such as betting on the financial markets or property price inflation, both in the UK and internationally.

3) Most governments have fetishised the idea of the balanced budget, meaning that temporary monetary shortfalls lead to austerity budgets, themselves a political choice associated with


wealth transfers to the property owners. The potential has been ignored for the State to borrow money for investment in socially and ecologically desirable programmes. However, those mechanisms do ultimately require that new exchange value is created in the productive economy, and that equates to economic growth, which as we have seen creates problems. This all means that the use of the capitalist accumulation process to cure the ecological and social ills that it produces is a short-sighted approach in the longer term. Investment in the unviable economy, then, is a process which fails to address the costs we are imposing on the future and thus undermines future prosperity rather than nurturing it. The unviable financial investment infrastructure is a de-personalised system of profit maximization which results overwhelmingly in the transfer of wealth to the owners of property, through the uneconomic processes of rent extraction and ecological asset liquidation. It fails on the three criteria of economic, social and ecological viability.

**The viable alternative**

We understand that wealth, in its general sense, as the sum of use values, is based on the transformation of natural resources, while the creation of exchange values rests on the process of human labour in that transformation. Under the capitalist system, that labour process involves exploitation which is the source of the increments in exchange value that we variously refer to, depending on the context, as profit and economic growth. There are contradictions between the creation of use values and exchange values, for example when things people need become unaffordable, or damaging products (environmentally or socially) become cheap.

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Money is one aspect of exchange value, with the functions of measurement, exchange and storage: while it can become dislocated from the underpinning exchange values, it ultimately relies on the creation of value. Investment is the application of money, whether from a store of value or through its creation as credit, to the economic process. Investment requires a return, eventually, from the productive economy, whatever the source and target of that investment. This must be borne in mind when seeking inward investment from sources external to a specific economy: the investor expects a return\textsuperscript{64}.

In the Viable Economy, investment comes predominantly from the following internal or endogenous\textsuperscript{65} sources:

- Redistributed wealth. Note that in a society and economy that


\textsuperscript{65} See our piece \url{http://steadystatemanchester.net/2014/05/12/where-will-the-money-come-from-endogenous-economic-development-for-the-viable-economy/}. 

\textit{Contradictions occur between use and exchange values and the underpinning material world.}
is moving towards greater social and economic justice, the sources of such wealth should diminish greatly: redistribution must be a temporary palliative in lieu of full systemic reform.

- Surplus generated in non-exploitative ways by the local economy, including savings.
- Fiat money created by public and private banks, under strict rules and regulation\textsuperscript{66}. Government-created money. Although our view is that this needs to be within the “envelope” of the permissible size of economy dictated by ecological reality.
- A share of the profits of industries operating in the economy, that rather than seeping out is, by agreement, utilised locally as what colleagues at CRESC call the ‘social franchise’\textsuperscript{67}, a pay-back to the community that hosts and pays for the enterprise.
- Tax revenues, or related funding streams, such as that envisaged under the 'cap and share' proposals\textsuperscript{68}.

In the Viable Economy, investments are focussed where they are needed, according to the three criteria of social, ecological and economic justice, always seeking options that do not create malign spill-over effects. So, for example, it is no good helping people save on energy bills if that saving creates additional emissions, by funding, say, a bigger car, or flights. Nor is it desirable if money saved unfairly privileges some groups, for example by paying for certain children to receive private tuition. Instead, an ecological and social multiplier should be sought, where the spill-over from investment is into further regenerative and resource-light activities, many of which will be non-productive by design for example cultural and aesthetic. The failure to adequately work through this issue is a feature of most Green New Deal proposals\textsuperscript{69}.

\textsuperscript{66} The control over the creation of fiat (bank-created) money could be a powerful tool in the transition to an ecologically viable economy. Some campaigners and commentators (e.g. Positive Money) suggest that private banks should be required to hold full reserves i.e. lend on the basis of deposits only, and the central bank can control the money supply directly, printing new money and granting it to public revenue for the elected government to spend in accordance with democratically elected priorities, that is social use value. This idea is popular in some sectors of the environmental and alternative economics movements but we are critical of it since it does not reflect the reality of bank-money since its inception or more fundamentally of the distinction between value and money, is unlikely to be implemented and is potentially stifling of the stimulus needed for necessary investment for social and ecological benefit. See our full critique: \url{https://steadystatemanchester.net/2018/02/23/we-need-to-end-growth-dependency-but-how/}


\textsuperscript{68} \url{http://www.feasta.org/documents/energy/Cap-and-Share-May08-summary.htm}

\textsuperscript{69} \url{https://steadystatemanchester.net/2019/02/28/what-kind-of-a-green-deal-the-implications-of-material-and-monetary-flows/} For a compilation of critical pieces on the Green New Deal
The Viable Economy will require financial intermediaries for savings and investments which do not starve communities of the affordable finance they need to invest in their futures. The monolithic and brittle 'too big to fail' banking system needs to be radically diversified for a resilient and viable economy. Public municipal banks with a regional remit to support their areas can help direct investment towards the basis of social and ecological prosperity.

In an ecologically viable economy returns to investors must be more modest and the cost of credit fair and reasonable. The legacy of large personal and household debt requires resolution, for example via programmes of debt forgiveness for those who cannot repay and who otherwise are locked into a cycle of poverty and/or overwork.

Some viable policy ideas

- Greater diversity in the banking system with an emphasis on publicly or mutually owned, locally responsive and responsible institutions that provide local vehicles for savings and investment.
- Adoption of the principle of endogenous development to guide investment seeking and decisions.
- Public investment in the local economy and in energy transition.
- Private firms to be 'called in' to negotiate social franchise deals as a condition for favourable environment for their operations locally.
- Attraction of foreign investment should not trump local interests.
- The development of local currencies such as energy-backed currency as part and parcel of the 'plugging the leaks' and endogenous investment strategies.
- Campaign for revenue raising powers for local/regional government.
- Positive policy instruments (e.g. transaction taxes, energy and resource caps and quotas) to prevent the burgeoning of material flows, from material and natural resources through to the pollution of environmental 'sinks', that result from the multiplication effect following the stimulation of the clean economy under radical decarbonisation programmes such as a degrowth perspective, see https://degrowthuk.org/2019/04/03/green-new-deals-the-degrowth-perspective/
8) About Distribution and Equality.

The problem

The unviable economy in developed countries such as the UK places an untenable burden on the planet. It fails to tackle poverty, social inequalities and deprivation at home, while being implicated in systematic super-exploitation and expropriation in the global South. The gains from growth are increasingly concentrated in the hands of the already wealthy and super-wealthy (who are more likely to be white, intellectually and physically able and male).

Income inequality in the UK is near its highest point for at least the last 30 years, not having changed in any significant way after the steep rise after the election of the Thatcher government in 1979\(^{70}\). The UK has the 7th most unequal incomes of 30 countries in the developed world.

- While wealth inequality in Britain is not exceptional by international standards, in 2016, the richest 10% of households had 44% of all wealth, while the poorest 50% owned a mere 9%\(^{71}\). Many households have no accumulated wealth at all and destitution has increased greatly under austerity policies since 2010.
- 19% of the population are considered to live in absolute poverty, that is, their income is below a defined poverty line of 60% of (2011-12) median income\(^{72}\). Among children, the rate is higher, between 25 and 30%. In Greater Manchester, levels in some places are extreme, with 66% of children in the Oldham ward of Werneth living in poverty\(^{73}\).
- Enormous pay ratios exist, even in public services, where a Chief Executive might receive more than fifteen times the wage of the lowest paid worker.\(^{74}\) This is openly promoted in the name of competition.

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• The rich are able to hide their wealth or place it beyond national tax jurisdiction in tax havens. They are able to avoid tax, often legally, and the financial sector of the City of London plays a role in this.

• The inequalities in income and wealth reflect the divisions based on class, locality, gender, ethnicity and ... luck.

• There is now much evidence that more equal societies perform better on a variety of indices\textsuperscript{75}. There is also an environmental impact\textsuperscript{76}. For example approximately 50% of the world’s carbon emissions are generated by 10% of people while the poorest half account for just 10%\textsuperscript{77}. The key pressures on the planet are the levels of consumption by the richest 10%, the growing middle class who seek to emulate their behaviour and ineffective resource use. At present the ecological footprint of the global economy is estimated at 1.5 planets and predicted to rise to 2 by 2030\textsuperscript{78}. For the UK the corresponding ratio is 2.77.

• Broadly speaking, those with less money, who include a higher proportion of those from black and minority ethnic, and working class communities, disabled people and other oppressed groups, cause lower carbon emissions. Yet they are more likely to live in areas with a poorer environment which affects their health, well-being and quality of life. Women as a group are also relatively disadvantaged in terms of income and wealth.

• An increasingly unequal society with cultural celebration of material wealth, high status, money-earning work (as opposed to caring for individuals, community building), celebrity and opulence drives unsustainable consumption of “positional” goods. Inequality produces anxiety, crime and social dislocation, resulting in lower well-being, for high and low earners alike, than in more equal economies.

\textbf{The viable alternative}

Economic growth is not a solution to structural inequality so the viable alternative seeks to act on the causes and the effects of

\begin{itemize}
\item http://www.shapingtomorrowsworld.org/hauptinequality.html
\item http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/world_footprint/
\end{itemize}
inequalities, through simultaneously developing economic and cultural alternatives. This means making living well, within planetary limits and with greater equity, the very basis for our society, our life together. This implies the promotion of a different understanding of human worth and prosperity, based on the idea of having and using enough to satisfy material, cultural and spiritual needs – a “frugal prosperity”, and pre- and re-distribution of income and wealth. While action at the national and international level is needed to change the basis of the economic system, much can be done at a local and regional level to pioneer alternative approaches to build more equal, just and cohesive communities, and encourage mindsets which value good and simple lives that are respectful of others and the planet's resources.

Some viable policy ideas

- Mobilising 'counter-propaganda' to promote a solidarity mindset whereby ‘your liberation is bound up with mine’.
- Reworking the notion of 'rights and responsibilities' to ensure genuine participation and stakes in society and its economy.
- Re-gear economic policy so the protection of life and the means to enjoy it (human need) is the first priority rather focusing on driving the economy for its own sake.
- Sharing out work more equally which includes a radical reduction in working hours.
- Adoption of policies for the Living Wage and also for the maximum wage, founded on democratically determined and small income differentials.
- Identify the potential benefits and problems from implementing a Universal Basic Income, Universal Basic Services, Universal Land Rights and campaign for the model that is most compatible with the Viable Economy and society (see section on Work and Income too).
- Lobby for a more progressive approach to both income and wealth taxation.
- Renew the relationship between the public and those whose


80 Taxation increases steadily as income and wealth rise.
role is to represent or serve them, with a zero tolerance policy on victim-blaming and condescension, both in public statements and in interactions.

- Local economic development support for cooperatives, small businesses and employee owned firms, for example via preferential business rates.
- Establish preventative measures against corporations that merely extract profits without discharging social responsibility to the local ecosystem, society and economy.\(^{81}\)

9) About Work and Income.

The problem

The unviable economy is not a good place to work and nor is it a good place to not work.\(^{82}\) On the one hand decreasing numbers of people work in high pressure, highly skilled jobs, administering the increasingly irrational system. On the other hand there are those who would like to, and could do paid work, but who cannot get employment, or who are under-employed. In between there are the armies of those with poor pay and conditions, the working poor. As automation and productivity increase then more and more people become surplus to the system's requirements, their work, at best, becoming more routinised, their employment and income becoming more precarious (via short term and zero hours contracts, for example in the so-called “gig economy”), or at worst they join the ranks of the long-term unemployed. This pattern is what we have in our region, and it is what characterises the global system. In all places there is the co-existence of modern, technology-based forms of work and exploitation, with more brutal patterns of exploitation (including people-trafficking and forced labour, zero-hours contracts, outsourcing and home-working)\(^{83}\). Meanwhile, unwaged work, chiefly of women in nurturing and caring, subsidises the system as it extracts profit.\(^{84}\)

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82 By work we include waged and unwaged work.


84 Mies, M., & Bennholdt-Thomsen, V. (1999). The subsistence perspective : beyond the
As this system has become entrenched, pay differentials have become much more unequal, while out of work benefits have become meaner and ever more conditional, as we have seen with the roll out of Universal Credit, the Personal Independence Payment and cuts to housing benefit. At the same time a constant drone of political rhetoric about ‘hard-working families’ demonises those who do not have the capacity or opportunity for paid work.

**The viable alternative**

In the viable economy and society, work both paid and unpaid fulfils a purpose while its duties and benefits are shared. Remuneration for satisfying, interesting work is at a reasonable level and while incentives and rewards exist, they are at modest levels. People who are not able to do paid work, or for whom there is no paid work are paid a reasonable wage with obligations to contribute to the community or environmental goals. The viable economy, then, implies a shift of emphasis from pointless work for private profit to meaningful work for public good for all types of work whether paid or unpaid.

**Some viable policy ideas**

Work and income involve a number of interrelated domains: they cannot be reduced to just one or two or three.

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With this in mind, we can sketch out some ways of improving the experience of work and the income security of households, under worsening ecological, social and economic conditions.

- Promote the Living Wage with the goal of participation by all large employers, public and quasi-public sector organisations and all their suppliers and contractors. Pair this with a maximum wage and pay ratio policy\(^\text{85}\).
- Universal Basic Income (UBI)\(^\text{86}\), Universal Basic Services (UBS)\(^\text{87}\) and the Job Guarantee (JG)\(^\text{88}\), are concepts attractive to many.

\(^{85}\) We do not specify the size of this but think it should be no more than 1:5.


in the environmental and progressive movements. UBS tends to appeal more to those on the left while UBI has appeal across the spectrum, though it also receives similarly cross-spectrum critiques. JG tends to be supported by some sections of the centre left, particularly those influenced by Modern Monetary Theory. However, all these options imply a continuing strong and funded Welfare State, itself not guaranteed under conditions of Viability Crisis. The Steady State Manchester collective does not have a unified view on these policy options. Some see UBI, UBS, or JG, respectively, as positive options and others are more sceptical. An alternative concept, Universal Land Rights, might be worth considering too, although is not well developed\textsuperscript{89}: while most immediately relevant to rural settings, it could also be applied more generally by identifying a share of the overall national freehold, with the land itself leased to the occupants. This would transform the pattern of land ownership and give urban populations a stake in the countryside (especially those areas “owned” by large landowners and corporations\textsuperscript{90}) as well as its production and its conservation.

- Establish a common basis for establishing the benefits of work experience whether in or beyond formal employment via a straightforward regional personal development portfolio for lifelong learning and community contribution for all people whether in or out of work. Encourage participation by colleges, large employers, the public sector and those under contract to them, and from community based organisations.
- Prioritise investment in labour-intense industry and decent jobs, recognising that there is a trade-off between availability of jobs, on the one hand, and the need to improve work-life balance and reduce overall working hours on the other.
- Campaign for introduction of an emissions cap and share framework as a redistributive and ecological strategy\textsuperscript{91}.
- Campaign for an overall reduction in working hours, thereby releasing employment for those that want it and increasing the

\textsuperscript{89} It has emerged in the sustainability movement in Galicia (literature in Spanish and Galician) but only in outline form. E.g. https://bit.ly/2Z5MrDn page 69.
\textsuperscript{90} http://tlio.org.uk/new-book-who-owns-england/
http://map.whoownsengland.org/
\textsuperscript{91} Everyone gets the same allowance which diminishes as the national carbon budget is used up. Income can be raised by selling part of one's share. See http://www.feasta.org/2012/08/21/cap-and-share-in-pictures-from-sharing-for-survival/, also http://www.tradableenergyquotas.net/
potential for employed people to undertake unpaid work in the home and community. This could lead to firstly, the reduction of hours worked over contract, whether paid or unpaid, backed by a Living Wage to reduce the need for low-paid people to work long hours, and secondly, the overall reduction towards a 21 hour working week\textsuperscript{92}.

- A reduction in working hours (together with the approach to investment discussed in section 7) could also help combat the upward rise in retirement age, with a balanced approach to contribution and income over the life-span.

### 10) About Environment

**The problem**

For the unviable economy the environment is just an afterthought. Yet without the environment, there is no basis for its operations, since it is the source of its inputs, and where it puts its wastes (“resources and sinks” is one way of describing this). The invisibility of the environment to conventional economics leads to a naïve, misplaced optimism that technology and markets will come up with solutions to those problems that are increasingly recognised by society. The conventional emphasis on growth (narrowly defined in terms of GDP) leads to various kinds of delusion that the impacts can be resolved, for example by improved energy efficiency, and that growth can be disconnected from the flow of materials from extraction to pollution, despite the complete lack of evidence that anything like sufficient decoupling is possible\textsuperscript{93}. And conventional economics has a further sting in its tail when it tries to convert the ecosystem into monetary value, commodifying the natural world, displacing forest dwellers, and bolstering carbon emissions through trading and financial speculation in them\textsuperscript{94}.

\textsuperscript{92} “Twenty-one hours is close to the average that people of working age in Britain spend in paid work and just a little more than the average spent in unpaid work.” New Economics Foundation. \url{http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/21-hours}


It is ever clearer that the global economy (and the UK is nominally the sixth largest national economy\textsuperscript{95}) is destroying the very basis for life on earth by crossing a number of ‘planetary boundaries’\textsuperscript{96}. This influential framework, together with that of ecological footprints\textsuperscript{97}, gives us a basis for defining the limits to the scale of the viable economy.

**The viable alternative**

In the viable economy and society, the environment is treated as fundamental, as what makes human life, including the economy, possible. There is even a case to be made for avoiding the term “environment” altogether since it allows the separation of environment from the “really important business of producing stuff and making money”. Economic activity has to nurture, protect and repair the ecosystem which means favouring ecologically positive and neutral forms of production and distribution, while maintaining human life on a fair basis.

This requires planning to keep the ecological footprint of society and its economy within the available biocapacity (currently exceeded in the UK by some 200 per cent. Rather than the emissions trading scheme currently in use (with its unrealistically low carbon price) we advocate a cap and share system that while controlling the emissions of the big players is also a redistributive mechanism\textsuperscript{98}.

\textsuperscript{95} [http://bit.ly/1svE7mT](http://bit.ly/1svE7mT)


"The curved arrow at the bottom indicates the impact of our lifestyles on both ecosystem and economy, and our responsibility to plan, protect and nurture." From our 2012 report "In Place of Growth", pp. 11-12

Some viable policy ideas

- Integrated accounting so environmental impacts, linked to economic indicators, appear on balance sheets, annual reports, prospectuses etc. So for each job created, for each pound spent, at, say Airport City, what is the net change in carbon emissions, biodiversity loss, nitrogen pollution, and so on?

- Action plans for the reduction of hydrocarbon fuel usage within a bioregional cap. The cap could be set on a shadow basis at first, becoming mandatory over say a five year period. This could be complemented by modelling of the impact of a cap and share scheme.

- A bioregional framework for ecosystem protection and restoration, including evidence-based measures to maximise soil, wetland, bog and woodland carbon sequestration.

- Focus local investment vehicles (such as the municipal / bioregional investment bonds discussed elsewhere) on the green economy, local food production and processing, energy reduction, human-powered and public transport.

- A recognition of our responsibility for ecosystem damage worldwide: a commitment to reign in harmful processes and to fund restoration.
Without strong policy interventions against the private motor car, cities will continue to choke, metaphorically and in reality – until the energy crunch, the result of increased costs of extraction, whether for fossil fuels or renewables (which have the additional problem of low concentration) hits home. Therefore, dis-incentivise private motor transport (except for those who have no reasonable alternative), for example by converting a proportion of roads to greenways and car parks to parks, charging for road use in the inner urban area (and later extend the zone) and constrict the flow of vehicles along arterial routes. Simultaneously encourage walking and cycling through lower relative cost infrastructure investment and provide clean, cheap, and effective mass transit, choosing lower tech, faster roll-out solutions such as trolleybuses rather than trams.

11. About Care and Caring

The problem
Just as the environment is considered an afterthought in the unviable economy, so too is care and caring. We are talking here about the practical, face to face activities of caring for, as well as the emotional and ethical sense of caring about, people, communities and the environment. Care and caring includes, for example, reproductive activities (childbirth and child rearing), as well as feeding, supporting, advising, consoling family members, so they are ready and able to go to (paid) work the next day; household maintenance; tending the sick and ailing; maintaining social networks and solidarity work in communities. Care and caring are mostly unpaid, and are only recognised and valued by the unviable economy once they are transformed to paid employment (usually low paid and usually carried out by women), able to be measured, subject to efficiency drives and contributing to GDP. All these activities are essential for human existence but unrecognised, un-valued and invisible to the non-viable economy,

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relegated to the status of non-productivity and maintenance. In our society, these activities are mostly carried out by women, and thus the distribution of care and caring responsibilities is a problem of gender equity. Feminist scholars have argued in favour of fundamental transformation of societal priorities, and against the rather simplistic solution to this gender inequity of encouraging more women to enter paid employment. Whilst unequal responsibilities for caring prevail, women face the ‘second shift’ of care and caring\textsuperscript{102} over and above their paid employment. Furthermore, it has been argued that there are environmental risks when women are in paid employment, as ‘convenience’ buying leads to increased energy and materials consumption\textsuperscript{103} and privatised household tasks (such as cleaning, laundry) use more energy and produce more waste than when carried out in the home. Care and caring are indispensable to individuals, local communities and societies, but there is hardly an area as important as this, being subject to so much aversion, degradation and marginalisation\textsuperscript{104}.

\textbf{The viable alternative}

In the viable economy and society, care and caring for and about people and the environment are considered central. The economy would be described as a \textit{provisioning} economy\textsuperscript{105} concerned with how society organises itself to provide for the survival and flourishing of all life, highlighting the relationships of interdependence, reciprocity, solidarity and the meeting of human needs – whilst also nurturing the natural world. The boundary between the maintenance activities of care and caring and industrial and monetised activities would be made visible and social value placed on care and caring\textsuperscript{106}. Furthermore, responsibility for care and caring would be equally distributed between men and women and a better balance between paid work and non paid work

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
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would be achieved. The hidden activities of social networking and community solidarity would be revealed and valued through a renewed focus on local community building.

**Some Viable Policy Ideas**

- Support campaigns for a shorter working week\(^{107}\). However, this should not just be in terms of the number of days worked, but following the daily pattern of care and caring, shorter days for both men and women\(^{108}\), so that responsibility for caring can be more equitably distributed. This might mean working with employers and Trades Unions to recognise and bring to the forefront the importance of care for human and environmental flourishing.

- Consider experiments with Universal Basic Income in order to recognise and value the unpaid work carried out (mostly by women) in the home and community. At the moment only better off households can even consider buying help in the home and UBI might make these choices open to more.

- Consider ‘commoning’ care and caring\(^{109}\). In this way, care and caring is shared, which not only raises the profile of care and caring, but also contributes to community building and solidarity. Support the development of collective childcare, collective elder care, collective support for those who are vulnerable or sick, food collectives. Ideally, these practices would be underpinned by reciprocity and mutuality but could include paid aspects. So, for example, services could be organised around local circles of support\(^{110}\) rather than expert occasional visitors, combining care with community building. A push for Home Start\(^{111}\) projects in every locality, will entail local volunteers supporting families under stress. Support for experiments with different kinds of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCS), would enable local people to recognise and care for older people in their own homes and

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\(^{107}\) See the shorter week campaign at https://www.4dayweek.co.uk/


\(^{110}\) For the idea of community circles and and some practical examples, see https://www.community-circles.co.uk/about-circles/

\(^{111}\) Information about Home start can be found at https://www.home-start.org.uk/about-us
communities, either involving or not involving local services, thereby strengthening community cohesion. Support for the spread of Timebanks\textsuperscript{112} or similar non-monetary exchange schemes in every locality could also build local networks and lead to increased connections and enhance well-being.

- Invest in participatory community enterprise\textsuperscript{113}. This means involving local people in defining local needs and designing projects (paid or unpaid) for support for carers or those in receipt of care. This would mean more adventurous commissioning. That includes start-up funds, but also greater recognition for the support already available in the community and voluntary sector for the development of community enterprises, particularly in the development of local cooperatives.

- Consider supporting experiments in providing universal basic services\textsuperscript{114}, which may help lighten care and caring loads, but are unlikely to help much with redistributing responsibility for care and caring, nor contribute much to community building.

12) About Consumption

The problem

The unviable economy depends on continued 'excess' consumption: without this, the economy stagnates. In order to maintain consumption a variety of strategies are used, by firms and governments alike:

- Built-in obsolescence: there are disincentives to producing durable products, or products that can be easily repaired.
- The development of entirely new products, together with the creation of false wants, through marketing, advertising, and

\textsuperscript{112} Information about timebanking specifically, can be found at https://www.timebanking.org/what-is-timebanking/

\textsuperscript{113} For a detailed example of how this approach was used in Lambeth, see Billings, L., & Britton, T. (2016). \textit{Designed to Scale: Mass participation to build resilient neighbourhoods}. London, Civic Systems Lab. Open Works, Civic Systems Lab. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B28SONHQ55V0pT2p1NGNvQk0/view


related means.

- The encouragement of a consumer culture and the language to go with it (e.g. “retail therapy”, “shop 'til you drop”, “must-have gadgets”) and the focus on those with high consumption lifestyles in the media.
- In the context of declining real wages, especially for those on lower incomes, credit is offered, itself a highly marketed product.
- The conversion of once free (e.g. children's recreation, access to heritage sites, wild foods and their processed products, areas of urban space), or publicly owned assets (e.g. utilities, aspects of health-care) into products that have to be bought on the market.
- Expansion into new markets.
- Outsourcing of production to countries with lower labour costs (higher rates of exploitation), including sectors such as tropical prawn production and semiconductors where indentured and forced labour are integrated into the supply and manufacturing chain.
- The creation of status insecurity, at all levels of income distribution, through the growth of inequality\textsuperscript{115}, in concert with the long working week, means identity and status is often asserted through the mechanism of consumption.
- The erosion of popular participatory culture in favour of passive consumed culture.

The consequences of the endless creation and practice of consumption (even though there are many whose personal ecological footprint is within their fair allowance) as a way of life are devastating for the planet's ecosystems on which we rely, through over-use of non-replaceable resources and habitat destruction, and the dumping of pollutants and emissions into the atmosphere, the soil, watercourses and oceans. At the same time it encourages a lifestyle that may be superficially satisfying, with high levels of stress and the breakdown of social bonds between an individual and the community as a result of long hours in alienated work and high levels of personal and household debt. To cap it all this economy is not viable in its own terms since its dependence on high levels of exploitation, fragile supply chains, and mushrooming credit, all can and do lead to chronic instability and periodic crashes.

In case of doubt, though, we are not blaming individual consumers here, but the system that turns our needs and aspirations into the motor of individualised consumption. This cheats people who will never be satisfied within a system that generates dissatisfaction, while cheating those in low wage economies who make the products, often in dire conditions.

**The viable alternative**

The viable alternative seeks to act on the causes and the effects of rampant consumption, through simultaneously developing economic and cultural alternatives, and addressing the systemic drivers of the consumerist cycle: excessive profit accumulation, false wants, inequality and the personal credit balloon. Much of this requires action at the national and international level to change the very basis of the economic system, but at a local and regional level much can be done to pioneer alternative approaches in the spheres of production, distribution, marketing and culture.

**Some viable policy ideas**

- Reducing inequality - see section 8.
- Reducing working hours - section 9.
- Combating consumer culture through promotion of authentic, participative popular culture.
- Valuing subsistence activities such as growing (and sustainably foraging) our own food, or making and repairing our own furniture and clothes.
- Rebuilding a money system that does not depend on high levels of personal debt (see section 7 on investment and money).
- Promoting product durability, modularity of working parts, re-use and recovery-recycling, through procurement policy and practice, and business stimulation.
- Prohibiting advertising to children\(^{116}\).
- Banning commercial advertising in public spaces\(^ {117}\).
- Campaigning for public broadcasting to abandon its craven acceptance and promotion of celebrity-competition-consumption.

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\(^{117}\) As in Brazil's megalopolis, São Paulo [http://www.newdream.org/resources/sao-paolo-ad-ban](http://www.newdream.org/resources/sao-paolo-ad-ban)
13) About Living Well and its Measurement

The problem

Just as the unviable economy is organised around the pursuit of aggregate economic growth, its economics uses the size and growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the related statistic, Gross Value Added (GVA) as measures of economic well-being\textsuperscript{118,119}. and they are even used as a proxy for-social well-being too\textsuperscript{120}. GDP is calculated by adding together the monetary values of all the goods and services produced in an economy. Doing this involves a lot of assumptions and estimates\textsuperscript{121}.

A focus on GDP growth, then, encourages us to value the amount of goods and services that are exchanged for money rather than their value to people and society. Economic growth as measured by GDP fails to distinguish between economic costs and benefits, or to account for uncosted things such as environmental destruction and unpaid work, for example looking after family members, neighbours and sustaining community\textsuperscript{122}.

These measures have two problems. Firstly, it is only clear to specialists what is actually being measured and this means that changes in GDP, although taken to indicate changes in economic well-being, do not necessarily indicate anything of the sort. GDP rises with cigarette advertising, armament sales, house prices, the credit-funded purchase of imported goods, encroachment on the green belt and traffic congestion, but it does not reflect those things that really matter to us. Desirable economic changes, such as a reduction in the proportion of people in poverty, or the increase in real incomes, are not picked up. Secondly, the narrow focus on GDP determines economic policy, since success in steering the economy is judged in terms of changes in GDP. Its increase becomes an end in itself with devastating impacts on the environment, as the IPCC

\textsuperscript{118} We might have used the word “progress”, but that is almost irrevocably associated with a linear approach that disparages other cultures and implies the dominance of people over nature? See our pamphlet Living Well: Practical Solidarity and Steady State Economics. http://bit.ly/1bTpEyX
\textsuperscript{119} http://on.ft.com/1weyLP9
\textsuperscript{120} http://bit.ly/1u5aBtN
\textsuperscript{121} http://bit.ly/1txqQHD
reports have made clear\textsuperscript{123}.

**The viable alternative**

The viable economic approach uses statistics that reflect key aspects of economic, social and ecological well-being. Rather than treating each of these three domains separately, though, measures are chosen that reflect their inter-connectedness. So, the proportion of money spent and re-spent within the local economy indicates the success of that economy in protecting its wealth, its success in promoting local activity and jobs, and ultimately its ability to source things locally rather than from across the globe, with the associated carbon emissions. The share of income going to the poorest 10 per cent of people indicates their relative prosperity while also reflecting the level of economic inclusion. A more equal society in income and wealth also means less trivial consumption of high-energy goods and services (since the richer strata disproportionately spend their surplus on these things).

**Some viable policy ideas**

- Consider developing a 'genuine progress indicator' or similar\textsuperscript{124}, for the city region to measure and direct economic development towards social and ecological viability. This should include social and ecological measures such as well-being, inequality, work/life balance, commuting times and carbon emissions per person.
- Develop integrated reporting on economic, social and ecological well-being.
- Devise measures that capture,
  - The bio-regional multiplier (money spent and re-spent in the region)
  - Income and wealth distribution
  - Credit and investment, broken down by sector
  - Employment, unemployment and working hours
  - Resource use and re-use
  - Energy use – carbon generating versus carbon-neutral


\textsuperscript{124} See our commentary http://bit.ly/1xoToLE
Estimates of carbon release and sequestration
People's use-time, contrasted, for example with working time and work-servicing time (e.g. commuting).
Unpaid work which contributes to individual and social well being.

- If presenting figures on growth, always break them down into component areas, e.g. manufacturing, agriculture, property sales, domestic consumption, etc. And seek to identify changes in work done outside of monetary exchange: for example much domestic work, neighbouring, volunteering, home and allotment gardening.

14) Population and Migration

The problem
A viable economy and society require a stable population in order to live well within planetary limits. In places like Manchester, in the minority world, fertility-based population growth has ceased because women, on average, each have fewer than two children\(^\text{125}\). Family size is influenced by mortality rates and economic security. Factors which lead to a fall in family size include being relatively confident you will be looked after if you need support, whether or not you have children to do this and knowing your children are unlikely to die before you.

Currently, levels of migration are increasing the size of the population here in Greater Manchester, although nowhere near as much as in London, or in many far less resourced regions of the world. Current policies focus on controlling the numbers and types of people coming into the country rather than addressing the reasons why people want to move in the first place.

While there will always be a flow of population between areas for very positive reasons which should be warmly welcomed, high levels of migration indicate many people are moving who may prefer to stay in their home country if they can meet their needs. High levels of migration are driven by income inequalities, themselves a result of the free movement of capital (under neoliberal doctrine) and labour (as a means of exerting downward

\(^\text{125}\) In 2018, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for England and Wales was 1.7 children per woman. [https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/birthsummarytablesenglandandwales/2018#regional-and-local-level-fertility-rates-vary]
pressure on wages), as well as climate change and wars\textsuperscript{126}. And to a lesser, but still significant extent, migration results from persecution be it political, racial, religious or on the grounds of sexual orientation.

**The viable alternative**

Solidarity is key to ensuring a viable population and migration patterns. This needs to be international, national as well as local. A viable economy and society will work on reducing the determinants of migration. Policies should be based on an understanding that the interests of our region are interdependent with the interests of those outside.

Manchester should be a place which values people from outside and celebrates the richness of a diverse and hospitable region. At the same time we should recognise that most people would prefer to stay in their home country if they can see a way to sustain their lives there and live in freedom from conflict and persecution.

If national and international economic equity is increased, migration will fall whether it is from the North East of the UK to Manchester, Manchester to London or Africa to the UK. Similarly if the impact of climate change is kept to the minimum more people will manage to sustain their lives where they are and this will reduce migration. There will be fewer wars in a world where more people can provide for their basic needs, live with greater equity within their societies and between societies and where economies such as ours produce and sell socially useful goods rather than armaments. Well functioning societies here and elsewhere are likely to be more accepting of political, racial, religious and sexual diversity.

However, given that at least some climate change and ecosystem destruction is already locked in, there will be further migrations, both from country to country and internally. Let's accept that.

**Some viable policy ideas**

- Focus on ensuring conditions in which small families can thrive: low mortality rates and support for people without sufficient income and care needs, and for people who do not have children.
- Focus on reducing the determinants of unviable migration by ensuring all policies foster equity between our region and others, good environmental measures which will ensure minimum

\textsuperscript{126} https://www.unhcr.org/uk/climate-change-and-disasters.html
climate change and do not fuel reasons for migration such as war e.g. arms exports.

- Given the role of war and civil conflict as causes of migration, work with organisations such as the Campaign Against the Arms Trade to encourage transformation of jobs in the arms trade in our region to socially useful production such as renewable energy technology\textsuperscript{127}. It goes without saying that local wealth should not be invested in the armaments industry. Unfortunately that is just what the Greater Manchester Pension Fund does, the scheme covering council and many voluntary sector workers\textsuperscript{128}.

- Campaign against global injustices and their causes, from free trade agreements to neo-colonial adventures.

- Modernise council twinning arrangements by focussing on climate-vulnerable settlements, raising money to assist them in mitigation and adaptation.

- Prepare for more immigration so people can be welcomed, accommodated and helped to establish decent lives and livelihoods that contribute to the social fabric.

- Fight fascism and racism wherever they appear.

15) The Built Environment

\textbf{The problem}

The towns and cities of England's now post-industrial regions grew as a result of the capitalist-industrial revolution. Moving into urban centres from the countryside, the accumulation regime we call capitalism opened factories, mined coal, established transport links and a service infrastructure (legal, financial, educational). A mass of former peasants, expelled from the land as the result of capitalist appropriation (enclosures) and capitalisation (mechanisation) filled the cities, first from the English countryside, later from the Celtic lands and ultimately from the colonies and ex-colonies of the global South. This new industrial working class was housed in appalling, overcrowded conditions. As industrial and political struggles led to improvements in living standards, housing spread beyond the limits of the walkable city, enabled by cheap hydrocarbons. As well as the factories, the banks, warehouses, offices and the growing retail and leisure sector established their own buildings. By the late 1960s, the landscape of Greater Manchester had assumed the overall

\textsuperscript{127} \url{https://www.caat.org.uk/issues/jobs-economy/}
\textsuperscript{128} \url{https://www.gmpf.org.uk/investments/holdings.htm}
shape we recognise today. While Manchester was the world's first industrial city, that pattern of expansion and re-formation was repeated across the world so that now more people live in cities than do not. Increasingly we see the industrialisation of building, with and enormous concentration, and embodiment, of materials and energy.

A city region that grew up, largely unplanned, to accommodate a former economic and industrial order, tries to adapt to the new one, doing the only thing that seems to work for it: expansion, expansion and more expansion.

This leads to poor liveability, enormous dependence on imported energy, and settlements that have limited resilience to the kinds of systemic shocks that are likely in the coming decades.

The viable alternative

What would a viable built environment look like? Some aspects are obvious enough, such as greatly reducing the staggering energy demand from our buildings (some 30% of UK greenhouse gas emissions come from housing alone), via greatly improved insulation, replacement of hydrocarbon energy systems, especially for heating, and higher occupancy levels. Others are perhaps less obvious. New buildings should clearly be built to the passivhaus standard, or similar, making zero demand for heating, but there are multiple options for securing that aim, from those dependent on plastics and other oil industry products, to those using more natural products (such as hempcrete)\(^\text{129}\). In the latter case, the demand on natural systems needs to be understood and carefully managed. In general, it makes sense to make the best of the buildings we have, since the energy demand in doing so is much lower than building anew.

Given the ecological and climate emergency that we are in, we should maybe be campaigning for a “presumption against development”\(^\text{130}\), that is to say, new developments would have to show a measurable and feasible improvement in ecological and material footprint, over the status quo, based on both construction inputs and ongoing energy and material costs.


Solutions that integrate natural systems can be encouraged\textsuperscript{131}. This includes increasingly common elements like green roofs and walls, but also the use of plantings, and exploitation of aspect, to capture and store ambient energy using features such as thermal mass such as stone and water.

**Some viable policy ideas**

- Apply a presumption against development, whereby new builds have to demonstrate quantifiable footprint reduction using a full input-output accounting method.
- Where buildings cannot be refurbished or repurposed, ensure the materials are re-used in the most energy and material-efficient way which will generally be closest to their existing form\textsuperscript{132} (e.g. salvage and re-use of doors, floorboards, piping and wiring, structural timber, brickwork cut into usable panels).
- Establish a systematic approach to reducing energy demand in the domestic, public and commercial sectors. We know what to do, e.g. establish a street by street insulation and boiler replacement scheme, but there seems to be considerable inertia in developing the necessary financial vehicles to make it happen\textsuperscript{133}.
- Use available data (collaborating with energy companies) to identify over-heating and issue an “18°C challenge”: bring overheated homes down and make a guarantee of minimum temperature, starting with at-risk groups.
- Work with energy suppliers to develop a “warmth offer” rather than merely an energy supply. The company would contract to guarantee a minimum temperature (say 18.5°C for 10 hours in specified rooms). This would be supplied by a combination of insulation retrofit, installation of more efficient heating systems and energy supply. Reverse tariffs (increasing tariff with increased consumption) could then be used to disincentivise frivolous heating.


Gupta, R., & Gregg, M. (2018). Targeting and modelling urban energy retrofits using a city-scale energy mapping approach. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 174, 401-412. [https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/file/b3546cac-6b2c-4cd0-b519-eff015802ac0/1/fulltext.pdf](https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/file/b3546cac-6b2c-4cd0-b519-eff015802ac0/1/fulltext.pdf)
• Establish a rotating retrofit fund, pump primed (Pension Fund, utility companies, central government?) and recharged by a share of energy savings and possibly a share of enhanced house values on sale.

• Use lower tech solutions where feasible, e.g. Curtains and window quilts: a low-tech but effective intervention. Establish workshops in districts teaching sewing skills and making insulating curtains: could be the basis for small social businesses. Establish an ARP\textsuperscript{134}-like patrol to encourage residents to use their curtains after dark in winter. Draft-proofing. Use plantings and water bodies to reduce heat loss (and summer heat gain) and to store heat / reflect sunlight.

• Use local investment to build local wealth and minimise emissions. Money would be used efficiently by preferring lower tech and natural solutions. Incentives would thereby be created for lower energy use and emissions reduction (as in the warmth service model).

• Publicise the co-benefits of these changes: healthy temperatures, reduced expenditure and debt (though beware rebound: spending released money on higher carbon activities and products).

• Conduct audits of all public buildings for energy waste and impose action plans. Work with the commercial sector on a similar model. Encourage consumer boycotts of profligate energy wasters (e.g. cafes with patio heaters, supermarkets with open freezers and fridges, shops that leave the door open in winter).

16) Conclusion

The Viable Economy and Society, based on the values of stewardship, justice, conviviality, solidarity, co-operation, equality and respect, seeks to to redress the parlous state we are in, ecologically, socially and economically. Its proposals, even if they need further development, show us how we can set out on a path to a resilient, more localised, stable economy that delivers what we all need: a frugal abundance or true prosperity, where people live in an increasingly equitable and harmonious society, locally and globally, deciding on rather than following economic rules, and not merely treading lightly on the earth, but protecting and restoring those

\textsuperscript{134} ARP wardens patrolled the streets in the anti-fascist war of 1939-1945, ensuring that citizens extinguished lights that could be visible from the air. A modern version could check for unnecessary heat leakage using infra-red detectors.
systems that make life possible.

**About the cover.**
The bee logo is based on the design by Marc Roberts for our Steady State Manchester logo, later updated by Sarah Spanton. To us the bees suggest,

- **Sociability:** conviviality and co-operative, collective action;
- **Industry, or economy:** the satisfaction of necessary needs;
- **Ecology:** the natural world of interdependence, and its fragility.

And the bee is also the symbol of our city, Manchester, that we want to see leading through example, as a society and economy for all, not just here, but in other places, and other times too.
Summary of the Viable Economy and Society

- A resilient, more localised, stable economy that delivers what we all need.
- A frugal abundance or true prosperity.
- Where people live in an increasingly equitable and harmonious society, locally and globally.
- Deciding on rather than following economic rules.
- Treading lightly on the earth.
- Protecting and restoring those systems that make life possible.

Values
- justice
- stewardship
- conviviality
- solidarity
- co-operation
- equality
- respect

Problems
- Malaise!
- Economic
- Social
- Mess!
- Ecological
- Crisis!
Appendix: Further reading

There is a large literature relevant to The Viable Economy and Society, much of which we reference in the footnotes to the text. This is a short selection of works we have found particularly helpful.


We also encourage you to read our previous reports:


And also the regular blog posts on our website http://steadystatemanchester.net
Concerned about increasing wealth inequality, climate change and financial instability, Steady State Manchester believes an alternative approach to economic development in the city and region is essential so that all can live well and within planetary limits. We encourage organisations to actively pursue ‘viable economics’ for a safe and good future for us all. Viable economics will involve:

- Re-localising food and other production in and near to the city, providing decent green jobs and more income equality.
- More security for us all because the environment is protected from further destruction.
- More secure access to goods especially food: we will be more resilient should there be climatic (e.g. floods) or financial shocks.
- More money staying local and more control over savings and investment.
- The city’s wealth being used for needed developments, for example radical and rapid programmes to ensure energy efficient, affordable buildings and to support other local, green and ethical enterprises.
- Balance: some sectors must grow, (e.g. renewable energy) and some must shrink (e.g. fossil fuels, private motoring, aviation).
- The focus is on the things we want the economy to deliver, rather than growth for growth’s sake (GDP or GVA measures).
- Less unnecessary consumption and a new culture of solidarity and participation.
- Less exploitation of the majority world while keeping open channels for communication and learning globally.
- Protection, restoration and expansion of the natural environment, including green and wild spaces.

This pamphlet explores these ideas in more detail, offering a comprehensive approach that integrates economic, social and ecological well-being: *The Viable Economy …. and Society.*

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