

Dear Councillor,

### **Greater Manchester Pension Fund - Fossil Fuel Divestment**

I am writing to you to ask you to call on the Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF) to divest from the fossil fuel industry. GMPF notoriously has the highest levels of fossil fuel investments of any UK local government pension schemes.

While councils and other employers across Greater Manchester have pledged to take urgent action to avert the climate emergency, they are let down by GMPF, which has over £1bn directly invested in fossil fuel companies that engage in coal mining and oil and gas extraction. Its “net zero” by 2050 commitment is too late and out of line with Greater Manchester’s 2038 commitment.

#### Risky investments and a failed engagement strategy

GMPF has often argued that their fiduciary duty prevents them from pursuing divestment. This is bogus. Other funds have divested or made commitments to divest years ago. Funds with no fossil fuel investments often perform better than or the same as those with them.

GMPF refuses to consider divestment as an option, preferring instead to continue to follow a failed strategy of engaging with BP and Shell. They rely on persuading two of the largest fossil fuel companies in the world to change their business model and stop drilling for gas and oil. Meanwhile BP and Shell do the opposite, acquiring and exploring new sites to drill and looking for new ways to exploit old gas and oilfields.

Our council pays millions of pounds to the pension fund every year, as do the council’s employees. Unison’s conference unanimously adopted a motion for divestment of pension funds in July 2017 yet GMPF refuses to listen to its members. The biggest threat to workers, pensioners, employers and taxpayers is the climate emergency - inaction by GMPF increases the risk of climate instability and economic collapse.

#### **As a councillor, please will you:**

- write to the Leader of the Council asking them to call on GMPF to divest from fossil fuels immediately, in line with the calls from members of the Fund and Council representatives to the Fund.
- contact local campaign group Fossil Free Greater Manchester to arrange an online briefing and discussion on the issue. Email: fossilfreegm@gmail.com
- Read more about pension fund divestment and the GMPF’s fossil fuel holdings: [information for councillors](#) prepared by Fossil Free Greater Manchester.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,