Right to the Streets, Season Two, Episode Six: Using people-powered performance to influence policy

**Introduction**

**Katy:** And one of the other actors, one of the young people said at the end of the show, just seeing all the policymakers there listening to us, I felt so important. I felt like Prime Minister.

**Eve:** Hello, I'm Eve Holt, Strategic Director for Greater Manchester Moving. Welcome to series two of the Right to the Streets edition of the GM Moving Podcast.

There are things that we can all do to create safe, joyful, and welcoming streets, parks, and public space. I've been working with people and partners in Trafford, Greater Manchester, to do just this.

**(**Three, two, one, action! We live here, our families are here, and we want this to be a safe space for our children to grow up as well.)

**Eve:** You'll hear from lots of the people and partners involved, including local citizens, community leaders, politicians, commissioners. Sports organisations, artists, comms experts, facilitators, performers, and many others who've all been playing an active role as part of a whole system approach to women's safety. Shifting the dial from fear to freedom.

In this episode, we're going to explore how you can use people-powered performance to influence policy. And yes, you heard that right, performance. We talk a lot in Manchester about doing things differently. Well, in this episode, you'll get a sense of what that really looks like. In deeds, not words. It's just one of the approaches that we took as part of the Right to the Streets initiative to speak directly to policy and decision-makers.

The very people who could then influence changes at a strategic level that could help to create safer, more welcoming, joyful public spaces for everyone, with a focus on women and girls. And this is where the people-powered bit comes in. We used a practice and process called Legislative Theatre to make this happen.

**Interview**

**Eve:** So what exactly is Legislative Theatre? It's quite a tongue twister. So let's turn to Katy Rubin. She is a fantastic Legislative Theatre practitioner, as well as being an absolute superstar all around, Katy worked with us and a team of local cast members over a really fun three months to make our People Powered performance take place in North Trafford.

**Katy:** Legislative theatre comes originally from Brazil in the 1980s and nineties out of an activist theatre practice called theatre of the oppressed that's used all around the world. And in Legislative Theatre in particular, we're thinking about a participatory and joyful and community-led policymaking or decision-making process that could happen with governments, with organisations, with communities, with people, institutions. But the basic idea is that people who are impacted by a problem in their community, in their neighbourhood, in their city, come together to make a play about that problem, about their experience of it, their lived experience. So the people who are impacted by it are the actors. That's really key.

And then they bring together. their neighbours, their friends, and people who make decisions and policies and rules about those problems into an audience of engaged participants. We call them not just spectators, but spect actors, because they are invited to come on stage and test out. Ideas to address the problem.

And then those audience members, those spect actors turn those improvisations, those testing ideas into, policy proposals. And then we work together with the policymakers and decision-makers in the room to actually transform those into real ready-to-go proposals, and we get commitments to action for what's going to happen next. So that's Legislative Theatre in a nutshell.

**Eve:** So we'll hear more from Katy and some of the participants in a bit. Now you know what Legislative Theatre is, I want to set some context as to why we use this as a way to speak directly to policy and decision-makers. We know that national and local policy and law have a direct and indirect influence on the way our streets, cities, transport and services are designed and managed and how our resources are prioritised.

So understanding what laws and policy are in play, the key levers for change and who has their hand on them is key to this work making a long-term difference. As well as unpicking the impact policy decisions have on the ground in practice and finding ways to bridge the common gap between decision-makers and the people those decisions will impact.

Exploring these questions with policymakers and decision-makers and Trafford Council, GMCA, GMP and Transport for Greater Manchester alongside local people and partners. was therefore a key part of our approach to include experimenting with a performance-based form of participatory policymaking, Legislative Theatre.

So now you know the what and the why, let's delve in into how we did this. So I'm at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Headquarters and I'm joined by three people who were an integral part of bringing the Legislative Theatre approach to North Trafford.

**Mike:** Hi, I'm Mike, I'm seventeen, and I am part of the cast of this theatre project.

**Nadia:** I'm Nadia, I'm thirty-two, and I was a cast member.

**Katy:** I'm Katy Rubin, I'm thirty-seven, and I am a Legislative Theatre practitioner, and I helped design and lead this process.

**Eve:** As Katy said before, Legislative Theatre starts with a problem, and this could be any problem that's affecting or impacting the lives of people in a community.

So for Right to the Streets, we start with a problem that people don't feel that our streets, parks, public spaces are necessarily safe, welcoming, joyful places for people to be and to be active. So I was really interested to hear what other problems Katy has worked on using Legislative Theatre.

**Katy:** Here in Greater Manchester, there's been a big project using Legislative Theatre to co create Greater Manchester's first ever homelessness prevention strategy in 2020 and 2021, which involved thirty five actors with experience of homelessness, creating three plays about all different barriers in homelessness services, in funding and commissioning cycles, in the intersection between structural racism and homelessness, which came up with twenty three proposals that are all part of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and has led to millions of pounds of spending and new hires, people with lived experience in management roles in the GMCA and people with lived experience of homelessness, training councils across GM and, trauma informed practice.

So all kinds of things. There's also been Legislative Theatre about, climate, responses in Glasgow city council about, access to culture about health and mental health in Greater Manchester, as well as in other places. So really any issue where, again, as you said, people are having a problem and it relates to how, services or how we get what we need in that city, in that place, health, housing, food, climate, all those kinds of things.

**Eve:** So there's a problem and there's a process. So Nadia, like what attracted you to get involved in this in terms of both the problem and then the process of Legislative Theatre?

**Nadia:** Yeah, so I've done theatre before in university. Legislative theatre wasn't something that I knew much about. Rights to the streets wasn't something that I was familiar with.

I'm familiar with theatre and that's what drew me in to it initially. It felt that it was something where I could combine like my love of theatre, with also potentially making a change. And that's what I want to do with my own theatre and my own theatre making. And so it was perfect for me to be involved in.

And then as I went through the process, I came to realise that it was something that was actually close to my heart and to my experiences and so it was a perfect fit and I realised that through that I could actually start to make some changes.

**Eve:** And we've heard about some of the changes that flowed from previous ones and we're going to get to that later to see what difference is this going to make. So Mike, what drew you to both the problem and the process? I had no clue

**Mike:** I had no clue what Legislative Theatre was. Until I got there, it was a really good experience because I didn't know that you like brought your own problems into it. Like your own problems is like how it all works and it's how it changes and everything.

**Eve:** So I guess the very start of the process is that recruitment piece, isn't it, Katy? So can you tell us, like, how do you recruit? What is an awesome cast of people who generally didn't know each other, generally didn't know about the theatre, and generally didn't know about the problem. They hadn't necessarily reflected on Right to the Streets, or even recognised that that was even maybe a problem for them. So go on, walk us through it.

**Katy:** I mean, recruitment works just as Nadia and Mike are saying. Are you interested in using art for advocacy? And sometimes people come in more for the advocacy and sometimes people come in more for the art, but the question here was, do you live or work or spend your time in Trafford in North Trafford in particular, and, have you had experiences with feeling a lack of safety?

Or feeling unwelcome in the streets or public spaces. And do you want to make those streets and public spaces more safe and more welcoming? So those are the questions, right? And are you interested in using theatre to do that? So people come in anywhere around that spectrum. And this project was really fantastic in that there were so many partners already working on Right to the Streets.

So we could reach out to those organisations and say, do you know folks who are engaged in your organisation? Who might want to join this process and it was open to anybody sixteen and up. So we didn't know, would we have most of the young people we ended up having most of the young people or mostly grownups, but it's really the issues that we bring up are totally shaped by who shows up, which is part of the surprise and the magic.

So, yeah, that was the recruitment and there was no other. qualifications or requirements necessary, other than being able to be there for those times, having that lived experience and the interest in those strategies.

**Eve:** There is magic. I mean, honestly, watching you as a cast, both in the dress rehearsal and then perform You would not think this is a group of people that didn't already know each other, just the way you all spark off each other and the point of connection.

And, that in itself, when we talk about change, relationships are often the key to how things change and bringing different people together, doing something different, having a different conversation is basically the root of system change. So it's there already in that magic.

**Katy:** We just had our cast party a few days ago and a bunch of people said, or really it was just echoing over and over that in addition to the policy proposals and the process and the play, that getting to know people that you wouldn't have necessarily been in a room with and how well a group works together who are all Trafford residents, but adults and young people and then coming together and working so well together and making new friends, which was beautiful.

And it was really fun that everybody didn't know each other and people were coming from different places. There were people who have never done any acting. There is a young woman in the cast, Sidra, who came in absolutely because of her experience and already having dipped her toe into advocacy around public safety in the streets and particularly street harassment and is in high school, but really wanted to have this opportunity to change the rules and the policies to make it safer for all women and girls.

Another person who is working on this project doesn't consider themselves an actor. But again, thinks, and this is something that I think about really important thinks this sounds like a fun way to address something that's actually, that's not fun, that's very serious. And I believe, that the revolution has to be fun and we're not going to show up or I always, I'll speak for, I always speak for myself.

I'm not going to show up if it's not, it doesn't have to be always fun, but if fun and joyfulness are not prioritised, right? And centred. And, that's going to bring us together. So that I know was one of the compelling opportunities was to have fun looking at something that's actually very serious and urgent.

**Eve:** So Nadia and Mike, in the performance, you point to a whole load of different problems in this space. So can you talk to us about how you came up with, in the end, this performance that highlights so many different issues around Right to the Streets. Like, how did you, as a group of people that haven't met before, you haven't necessarily engaged in this subject. Get to that stage of having a story to tell.

**Mike:** I mean, well we just reflected on our own experiences and we brought our own experiences to the performance and that's how we shaped it because if none of us had the experience of going through like safety on the streets and like Right To The Streets and everything we wouldn't have had a performance we wouldn't have shaped it how we did, and like, obviously everyone had completely different experience. Everyone came from like different backgrounds and where they came from and everything. And that's how we came up with all like these different problems, all these diverse ideas. I mean, I think one of the things that we did was, still images of how we felt about our area.

I know some of the images that I did was a lot of like, gang related images because that was my personal experience, like, to do with, like, gang violence and all that.

**Katy:** Yeah, absolutely. And then those images, we started to see connections and build solidarity. And from there, as Mike said, telling stories. Yeah.

**Eve:** So there's lots of different parts of the creative process. So you're actually using lots of different forms of art as well in this process, not just ultimately a performance. And what about you for you then Nadia?

**Nadia:** I came in a bit later into the process. So a lot of the cast, they had spoke about their experiences already.

However, we, I remember doing activities where we thought about the sounds in the park and we did these sounds ourselves. And just to get a sense of how we felt in situations. Some of the sounds were like catcalling. Certain things that we'd hear, like rubbish on the floor, and we made these sounds with our own mouths just so we could really sense and feel the environment, and how we feel when we're in these parks and how our safety and things like that.

So there was a variety of different ages and what I noticed was particularly some of the young women's experiences were actually the same as the experiences that I'd had like fifteen years ago. Almost identical, which was very telling and that actually made me think, wow, there's really not been much change in all that time. And, these experiences are very similar for all of us throughout our different ages.

**Eve:** And that felt really important to have people at different stages of their life, really, and with different experiences from different demographic groups, because in the end, everyone's relationship with the city, with the street can be very different and it does change over time.

And so many people we've heard through this project and bringing together generations, people have gone, oh, well, I think it's got a lot better. And then they suddenly listen to somebody else who's younger or lives in a different part of the city who tells them a very different experience. And that's very unifying really around that call to action collectively.

So we've got these problems that you bring and, your own experiences and those of the other members of the cast to the performance. And then take on these characters and they're absolutely brilliant characters. So go on, Mike, tell us about some of the characters that you play in the performance.

**Mike:** Well, I played a football hooligan. Which that was like last minute job, but it was really good. It was very effective. Yeah. And then I also played a weird, creepy guy in a park and a tram station. The characters are like real life as well. You know what I mean? It's not like we've just made it up. It's like, we've generally like seen that type of person in the streets, like doing these things. So yeah, it's not like it's just made up or anything like that. So yeah.

**Eve:** Yeah. And they both felt familiar. I think when, Katy asked people in the audience, really, whether they related to the stories and to the characters, there was a definite yes. People could picture the characters that you played.

And what I loved about both, I don't know how intentional it was with what you did was, Yes. You could see that they were not necessarily bad people at all. There were people in a certain scenario and their life experiences meant that, they then unfortunately were acting in a way that was really conflicting with other people's rights to the streets.

But you could see that they weren't necessarily intending to cause harm when he was excited after the football match, running around on the streets. Not necessarily realising the consequence that had for a whole lot of other people.

**Mike:** The first weird creepy guy in the park, he basically, he was taking drugs. And then, this girl, that had problems at home, came and sat down. And, for me, how I thought of it was like, he saw himself in her at like a younger age, what I mean? So he was like, he was like smoking weed and that, and he was like, oh yeah, try a bit of this to like, take the edge off. Because that's what he was taught as a younger person. So it's basically a cycle. And then the weird guy at the tram stop, he was basically just being like, really persistent asking for Nadia's character's phone number. And I was like, I thought to myself, why is he doing this? You know what I mean? But it's how it is. And obviously with a football hooligan, he was just drunk and he's like, Oh yeah, my team won. So I'm going to be like, I'm drunk. I'm like, I don't care what I do.

**Eve:** And you, so you ended up having to relate to all three of those characters. So tell us a bit about your character, Nadia, and her experiences.

**Nadia:** I played Natasha, who experienced harassment in various points of the play, at school, and also on the tram.

And both times she asked people in authoritative positions, teacher, tram staff for help and they dismissed her, which then put her in further danger. And also, we were talking a lot about being an active bystander and stuff like this. It showed in that situation how people was there that could have done something and they didn't do that, or they wasn't able to, or they didn't know how to.

Yeah, so she was having trouble with… She didn't have money to get home, which meant that she was further than put in danger, and there wasn't really much solutions for her. Mike's character, when he played the creepy guy, that was something that made her feel very unsafe. And that was my character.

I was playing somebody who was maybe seventeen, eighteen. And it wasn't hard for me to channel that because I was, in fact, probably playing myself when I was about seventeen or eighteen and channeling, like, the fears that I had then. And it's not like it's changed, for any woman at any age. There's still these concerns.

However, when you're younger, you are maybe in a more vulnerable position. And so I felt like I was really channeling that and it wasn't really difficult for me to do.

**Eve:** Talk us a little bit further through the process then Katy. So they've performed, well, yeah, tell us, you tell us what happens.

**Katy:** So at the Legislative Theatre event, so we spent some weeks, getting ready for this and building the story, also building the sense of the group and the understanding of what's going to happen.

So that was really important in the weeks before the Legislative Theatre event is that we prepared for testing out ideas with the audience. And I have to say, this cast was particularly good at pushing back on the audience's ideas. And that's a real policymaking skill that we think that, this is a real opportunity of Legislative Theatre that potentially could, as we said, be useful in lots of different policymaking spaces that sometimes policymakers, first of all, sit in a room by themselves.

Think about what the problem is themselves, even if they're not the ones experiencing it, let's say, and then say, oh, here, we're going to throw a policy or a rule or a change at this issue, but don't necessarily have a way to test it. So we were, in rehearsal saying, okay, we have this play, but the play is just the beginning.

The play, as you said, is the problem. Now we're going to ask people to say, do they recognise these problems? So they talked about the problems they saw. They thought about how they recognise them in their own lives. Right. And lots of the people there are obviously from Trafford, from all of GM.

And these things don't just happen in Trafford. We're looking particularly at this area. And then they said they got to talk to their neighbour and say, if I could throw a new idea, a new rule, a new policy, a new resource, a new practice at this problem, one of the moments, right, that we've just talked about that happened in the play, in the tram stop, in the park, in the school, in the street, etc.

What would it be? So in rehearsal, we had practiced if somebody comes in as a different character or replaces one of our characters to try a new idea, what we have to do is say, okay, that's the new idea and then improvise to show based on our knowledge and our research that we'd done, but really our, especially our lived experience, what are all the holes in this idea?

Why would it not quite work or what about it would still be a challenge? Right? So it doesn't mean we're just shutting down the audience member and saying that's a bad idea. We're saying we would practice it as yes, but, right? So in improv, sometimes we say yes, and, and we say yes, but your new idea is great, but this is why it's, there's still a challenge.

Right. And that is not to say that they're wrong, but to actually get those audience members, those spect actors to be even more radical and to push their ideas further. And for all of us to think this is an opportunity to see how we need to negotiate these ideas together, to get them working for everybody in an actual lived context.

So we were really prepared for that moment when at the event we said to the audience, okay, now, and this is the most fun part, right? We, say, okay, and they talk to their neighbour and then we say, okay, who has an idea? And some people raise their hands and then we say, okay, come on up.

And then they're shocked. But we're very serious that if you just say an idea, it kind of fizzles out and dies. Because sometimes I think you meant this, and you think you meant this, and we're not testing it, and we're also not even understanding each other.

So we say, and the other thing that we're not doing is taking a risk alongside other people who are really experiencing the problem, right? Which is one of the definitions of really being in solidarity. So we say, no, no, if you have an idea, right? We just took a risk and showed you this whole play, which is real.

Now we need to test out the idea. And so they have to come up and say, I want to do this moment. As this character, a new character, or replace one of the characters, and then we improvise and push back and it goes a little wild and we get to see what might happen, which leads to a really rigorous analysis with the audience then about what else do we need to make that idea work, which gets people starting to think about real concrete interventions. So that's what happens next.

**Eve:** And that’s the point that it shifts, isn't it? And it's a big shift in energy in the room when suddenly they realise what you meant at the beginning, when you talked about them being spect actors, spect actors. Yes. I'm not people that are just going to. Yeah, observe passively. It becomes a very participatory process and the cast kick in.

My goodness. Like, that is just such a joy to watch because the fun that you have at that point where this person suddenly discovers that they have to be part of it and they can't just make suggestions passively from the sidelines, they have to embody it and that's the difference, isn't it? And that leads to much greater sense of ownership and commitment for the problem and the solution.

And they join the cast and they try and test out their idea and you play with them and have so much fun in the process and it, and the whole audience then, really can see, come alive really. And, thankfully I think we had four different people all come and test out, different potential solutions, which got worked through.

So yeah, brilliant. So they all intervened at different stages and different suggestions. Can we pick one of those and just tell people what they did? What was their suggested solution? Then what happened?

**Mike:** Well, Ben was the first one and he chose the bit where the football hooligan came out and it was so funny how he did it because obviously he was the first person.

I had no clue what he was doing really. You know what I mean? And then obviously I came out doing my football hooligan stuff and he just stood in front of me and started celebrating with me. And I was like, what's going on here? I'll go with it. It worked. I can't remember if the people at the tram stop, they left or did they stay?

**Nadia:** I think they left.

**Eve:** They left.

**Katy:** For a while, they were watching to see what was going on, right?

**Jack:** Yeah, that's what I mean. So it worked. It sort of worked cause it took the attention off them and it brought the attention on him. And I think that's where the bystander training came in. Cause obviously he wanted to do something, but he had no clue what he was doing.

So he just did it and I was like, okay, then.

**(**Come on, you reds! Come on, you reds! Yes! Come on! Let's go! Come on! Okay. Come on! Well, my name's Big John. What kind of loser? Who's this? Listen, man, you! Listen, you! You're being useless! No, no, no! I'm not supposed to be in that part of the deck! No, no, no, this guy, he's, he's not supposed to be in the pub. Oh, alright. Can you get me a free pint? Me, me, me. Wait. Don't feed her, wait, let her drink. Alright, alright, alright.Do you need anything else sir? I want to go to the pub now )

**Eve:** So it was the, it was the five D's of active bias in the training. One of those is distract, isn't it? And he was very much going for the distract, taking your attention away from harassing people at the bus stop to being very chummy and a mate and like, let's go to the pub together really. What were some of the problems that then occurred when he tried to do that?

**Mike:** It created more of a scene. It took the attention away from like what was actually happening and like leaving all these people scared like went away, not having a good feeling about it and they don't really want to come back to the place or like go out when it's like football matches or anything like that. So that's like the bad thing that happened really. Yeah.

**Katy:** Yeah. In a way it potentially or escalated the, the thing so that it, right. So it takes up even more space. So it did take the. Attention away from the women sitting at the tram, right? So we, it led the audience to talk about the nuance of bystander interventions and what does it mean to distract, but then will it escalate or deescalate?

And I think it led us to think about the actually needing that training. And then there was also the conversation. I think this was something that that spect actor Ben was going for was to think about. How do men think about looking out particularly for other men's behaviour and what kind of training or support do men need to think about how to talk to other men and how to, reel them in or call them in as we say, and so there was a conversation, if it was just women, if there hadn't been any men that maybe that particular intervention wouldn't have been safe. So that was an interesting conversation.

**Eve:** So we've done that. They've come and they've tested out their ideas just a little bit. What, how's that for you two at that point in the process? We did

**Nadia:** We did go over this in our rehearsals, so we practiced, like, how it would be. And, sometimes you have to be careful not to go overboard and make sure that you actually let people, show their idea.

But yeah, it's obviously it's fun as well, but yeah, it's just very interesting. You've got to obviously improvise on the spot and it's interesting. And I suppose because it comes from our experiences and stuff, we know things that maybe have been done and don't work and stuff like that, or how we would feel in that situation because we're actually talking about our own experiences.

So that does make it a bit easier when we're improvising and pushing back on these things.

**(**So the teacher was so overwhelmed with other stuff when Natasha I think reached for help and paradoxically he was going to some training about the things he was supposed to do.)

**Eve:** What then happens next?

**Mike:** Well what happens next obviously like they see it and they write, they write down problems and how they think they could change it and then it gets put to a panel of policy makers and then we have like the police, transport and all these other people like women's, right? I think it was women's rights or something like that. I don't know and they basically went through it and each one of them they buy they basically started talking about how they would change that problem And I'm like obviously they all made a promise that they have to like do this certain thing by a time period.

**Nadia:** I think from what we've seen, maybe the inspectors being trained as well in, like, I think I don't want poverty, because I think, when you zoom out, these things are happening because of, like, inequality, poverty, all this money stuff. So I'm hoping that if some of that doesn't exist, then you don't end up with that result, isn't it? Maybe? I don’t know.)

**Katy:** And before they make the promises, so they, as everyone wrote down the ideas, like Mike said, and we had, yeah, so then you have sort of like thirty or forty ideas. And then we give the spect actors, the audience, an intermission, but not the policy team. So they have to work hard and, they have a sweaty fifteen minutes where they have to turn all those thirty or forty pieces of paper into three summarised proposals. So they had to say, okay, so, and, and they had, they were helped because at the top, they, people could circle if it was about education and, and, and campaigning and bystander training, or if it was about transport or if it's about parks and streets, those are the issue areas.

And then they broke into those teams. I think exactly. Yeah. Parks, transport and education and bystander training. And they had to turn, they had to combine those. And we asked them to say what's popular and what's practical and what's innovative and what's responsive to the problems in the place.

So we're always coming back to the way we frame the problem and trying to welcome in creative and bold ideas. And I think we did a pretty good job of having a mix of really immediate things and things that were more creative or, or long term. And then, yes, like Mike said, then they're on the spot and they put those ideas back to the audience for what was a very lively debate and, deliberation.

**Eve:** So one of the comments afterwards from someone who is a counselor, and somebody else actually that it's this next point in the process. People said, oh, we talk a lot about co production. That is it in action. So the point at which, and Imogen and Louise did a great job of writing up what these key, few key policy proposals were, and then you invite in the audience to basically shape those, to add to them, take away, to make them actually feel far more impactful and doable, and yeah, the energy in that room.

So when people talk about co producing policy, often you have people sat down around round tables and even very well facilitated and drawing on people's lived experiences and, trying to get to very practical solutions. And my experience often, the energy can dip, but there's something about that, again, that sense of embodying these problems, embodying these solutions that those hands were just going up and, and all the different perspectives that came up in the room, you really got to hear that people could see this from lots of different angles, and collectively shape something that, that hopefully everybody could largely kind of agree on. And I mean, that took a huge amount from you, Katy. So this is a very skilled process in holding that process at this point. We are now about two hours into the evening and you've got some sweaty policy makers.

They've been made to work hard. You've got a cast. You've worked hard. You've got spect actors who've participated in it and you're having to really hold them to collectively to get to something that's actually going to be able to hold up and be workable. So we get to that and then there's a voting. So do you want to talk us, yeah, Nadia, do you want to talk us through the voting point?

**Nadia:** Yeah, so they've all set out the three different commitments and then it goes to a vote to see which one is the one that, people find the most compelling, commitment, that has been made.

**Eve:** So there were three, we ended up with three key policy proposals. Go on Katy, tell us what those three were. Testing you now. Yeah,

**Katy:** Yeah, absolutely. So we've talked about the first was in this transport category, and it started with, there's the already there's going to be, they're already planning to roll out a pilot for QR codes, as we said, to connect to a live chat with GMP if you see or experience anything, scary or dangerous or whatever that is, or harassment on the tram.

And so then there was some A bunch of sub points to that that were developed through this deliberation so that accessing support in public transport should, include that you can access via a QR code or a phone number. The audience proposal was that it wouldn't only go to the GMP, but there would be other kinds of support services, charities, et cetera, that would be trauma informed if you didn't want to, if you didn't feel comfortable telling the GMP or the police or you didn't want to criminalise the other person, but you just wanted support. And that needs to include free wifi. There was a further proposal for free transport for all, right? So that people could, as in the play happened. If somebody's trying to get on the tram because they don't feel safe on the platform and they don't have money for a ticket that wouldn't then cause them to be kicked off the tram back into that situation of danger.

Proposal number two, as Nadia said, the most popular was yes, about rolling out a Greater Manchester wide education campaign against violence, particularly aimed at men and boys in football colleges, sports stadiums, gyms, schools, all kinds of institutions.

(So actively reaching, men and boys in that borough, this time around, we're going to do it by looking at the University of Baltimore to reach men and female students. And I love talking to you on the episode about, this is okay, like, is this okay? So one of my commitments is to talk to you, learn about ideas. I think that just sounds really energising and fantastic, but specifically, bringing men and boys into this space to talk about I've got a possible masculinity and that as well.)

**Katy:** In the audience was really, really interesting and, it was interesting to the policy makers that it shouldn't just be showing what we don't want to see, but that we can frame that positively in what we do want to see. And then another part of that proposal was that alongside that there should be active bystander training available to all GM residents, and that should also be an awareness campaign, videos, apps, face-to-face, et cetera.

And that public service employees can be the ones who are already in those positions physically in those spaces and should be getting that training and delivering that. And, I think that's really, really key that they should be frontline active bystanders. The third, which was the second top priority with the green and red cards voting, I got the most second, most green cards of the audience was about activating parks as programming spaces so that, youth workers should be, in parks and if there's any built spaces in parks, using those built spaces, sheds barns, but also outside in the park, turning those parks into spaces where there's programming for young people and not only young people.

And that the volunteer and neighbourhood groups and the friends of parks groups that are already engaged, that small grants and small amounts of money can allow them to do a lot of work in beautifying, cleaning up and running programmes in the park. And that there was a particular audience priority that those funds should go to youth workers and programmes in the park before more police officers or uniformed officers in the parks.

So those were the three policies and the priorities that were that through the voting. And, there was a lot of energy around the voting and people were also invited to raise a red card if they had any dissent, anything that hadn't been said already that they thought could really, cause a problem.

And you actually, I think Nadia, you raised a red card, with a really good point about young people reporting things they see in the parks and not having to go through their parents or their parents, not having to know if young people have seen something and they should be able to communicate or report about what they've seen without having to tell their parents, I think, because that was one of the bits in the play was also that the young women were in the park, but their parents didn't know they were there.

Primarily because that park had a reputation of being unsafe. So how do young people, how are they able to engage with the authorities about what's going on without necessarily getting in trouble generally?

**Eve:** So that process is brilliant. We then end up with our policy panel. So as we said, we've got some people there from GMCA, from TFGM, from Greater Manchester Aging Hub, from the women and girls panel, from GM for women, who've I missed.

**Katy:** GM police.

**Eve:** GM police, yeah, GMP, it's a fantastic array of policy makers.

**Katy:** Oh, and Trafford Council, of course.

**Eve:** And Trafford Council, thank you, yes, who all then were asked to make one commitment that on the back of those free policy ideas. What is really within their influence. So it's not expecting them to be able to say, yes, I'll make that happen because that's not necessarily within their power, but recognising their proximity to power, to other policymakers, to politicians and others that what can they do that's within their influence. And then they all made a commitment, which we'll be going back to them and checking in.

**Katy:** Yeah. So they have to report back on what they did and what came out of it. And before that, the proposals for our listeners who want to follow along are going to be live for anyone to see on the GM moving website.

And then we will publish an update on. The actions that that policy team has taken and where that's led. Obviously, that's a first step and it needs ongoing engagement, which might lead us to our next question. But this is even if the project ends, it's a longterm push. And so how are we going to use potentially the energy that we've created or even the sense of community that we've created or even these stories and these scenes to continue to push those policy makers forward towards those commitments and those proposals. Yeah.

**Eve:** Yeah, great. So the next question really is so what? So part of that so what is this clear accountability process for those individual policymakers?

I guess another part of the so what is that what we believe is that because they've participated in that process for three hours, that even without that accountability, that there's, they've got a sense of ownership and responsibility for those problems and solutions. And they might do more go above and beyond what they've committed to in that spur of the moment, but they're probably more moved to have conversations with other people to take action and with a much wider lens on all the different perspectives that they've heard during that evening.

But it'd be lovely to hear from each of you. What do you think, what would you like to see, what impact has it had and what would you like to see going forward? So I'm going to come to you, Mike, first. What would you like to see happen and anything that already has happened?

**Mike:** I think one of the things that we didn't talk about was the people in the parks, like non uniformed people.

I would like to see that because When uniformed people go into parks, it's like, oh yeah, I'm a authority figure. I'm going to tell you what to do and all that. But if you see someone that's like non uniformed, like identifies themselves as like, oh yeah, I'm working with this charity or doing this with this person.

Then I feel like young people are more likely to speak to them. Cause I feel like nowadays the young people have a lot of trust issues with authority, like for the way that we've been treated and all that, like as a generation.

**Eve:** Yeah, I certainly left with a sense of the potential with park groups who are local citizens who are really present in parks and places.

They really care. They're part of a neighborhood. How different would you feel if they were trained as active bystanders? Feels like a really practical, doable thing.

**Mike:** Well, the example is I used to do rugby when I was like fourteen, fifteen and that, and then obviously rugby lads. Catcall a lot. I mean I'm not like annoyed me But they thought it was fun because of the age, I mean, they didn't know like it was wrong and all that And I would like really like to see obviously the bystander training with like the men and boys because of that issue because a lot of younger boys and men, they don't actually understand that it's wrong.

They think it's just fun and it's for a laugh. But then as you get like older, you realize. Plus I feel like obviously with that as well, a lot of people, they come in groups. And obviously for like a, either like a young woman, it's really intimidating for them. Like, it's not like, oh, you're just gonna go and like, ask for the number or whatever.

You've got like, a full group of people, like, catcalling and all that. And, like, nine times out of ten, they're from like, fourteen to like, eighteen. You know what I mean? Or maybe like, a little bit older. And it's like, it is really intimidating, even though like the kids, it's still intimidating. So that's why I feel like that really needs to be like a thing that actually happens.

**Eve:** Yeah. Great example. Glad you brought that one up. So we'd like to see, so we've had some of, MU foundation have engaged in active bias on the training and cricket, Lancashire cricket club as well, but only some of their staff, whereas the potential, that was their whole workforce. And also those contractors that come in martial games and all their supporters networks.

And all the players themselves and their networks, like, wow, how transformative could that be? That could be really exciting. So Nadia, for you, anything that has changed for you in the process that you think it's been impactful already and anything you'd like to see going forward?

**Nadia:** Yeah, I suppose I'd like to see like more of this energy and community spirit, people coming together and looking out for each other.

And I think what was really key for me is the way, people was able to, through theatre, through seeing these things like slightly being transported to the streets. And so, people were coming up to me afterwards and saying, oh, like, thank you. And like, I was moved by this.

That's good because then, you made an impact with this and people are able to see the characters, empathise with them, relate to them or also think, oh, that was my daughter or what was that? My sister. And so then policymakers were actually able to feel it.

It gets, it gets more to the heart and, it helps then, then policymakers to be more passionate about it rather than just seeing things on statistics and paper and going to a three hour meeting and talking about things. Yeah. And then it just becomes boring. And then, you probably think, oh, I can imagine you just like, oh, it just becomes just another task, whereas if you like, you're really passionate about something.

You're more likely to see it through. So I want to see this, energy, this community spirit. People can outreach over this bystander training. Cause it's not just going to take, policymakers, even if we have people in the government at the top, you know, doing everything they possibly could, this would still need the people and it would still need the community.

And like they say, it takes a village to raise a child. Do you know what I mean? It's not, you know, it takes all of us. So I just want to see this just keep going through GM, the world,

**Eve:** Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, just, yeah, that point, everyone has a role to play here and you summed that up beautifully.

And, I talk about making change is it's hard work, it's also artwork and it's also heart work. And we felt all three of those in that process, is the head, heart and the hands and combining those is so much more powerful than people just stuck in their heads and not really committed to action and not feeling it.

**Jo:** I'm Jo Harding, I'm a councillor in Trafford.

**Dom:** Don Coleman, senior policy officer at Trafford.

**Bob:** Bob Ward, communications manager at Greater Manchester's Combined Authority.

**Eve:** So, you've just watched the performance and participated. Can you tell us any particular standout moments for you?

**Jo:** I thought the young people in that cast were absolutely brilliant. But the way they actually made those scenarios come to life. I was sitting there thinking, oh my god, yes, that happens. oh my god, yes, that happens. They were absolutely brilliant.

**Dom:** Yeah, it's been inspirational. They've brought so much energy, humour, honesty and challenges for us all to hear and reflect on. So it's fantastic they've been able to share this with us.

**Bob:** I think it was a really innovative way of showing experiences that clearly people in the room recognised. I also thought it was really thought provoking, seeing them push back so hard against some of the suggestions that we had showed how difficult it is to come up with solutions.

**Eve:** So we were warned at the beginning that it'd be quite messy, quite tricky, but there's something really wonderful, isn't there, in actually that level of energy in that room, in co creating those suggestions. Because there was, there's a real sense of fire in people's belly, on policy, which often, you talk about policy, and you see the energy often go, so is there anything different you think that will flow, having used that kind of a process to come up with suggestions?

**Jo:** I think for me, as a councillor and a policy maker, we often talk about co-production or co-creation. We don't do it very well. That as a method of co-production is actually brilliant because you've got people in the room that are living those scenarios, talking through them and then you think, ah, and then they thought about their own solutions afterwards. So I think as a model of co production and co creation, it's something that we should be looking at.

**Dom:** Yeah, I'd love to see it adopted on lots of other things as well and I think. What's really important is seeing people feel like they can contribute, that they've been heard. Commitments that are visible as well, but they're too so old and shared. I think that's really important, everyone goes away feeling like they've contributed and they've been heard.

**Bob:** There's so many different ideas coming forward, but so often with engagements. I always think it can be boiled down to you just go in there, ask a question, listen. But so often, sadly, that will then lead to a quiet room and nothing coming forward. Whereas this clearly did, had the opposite effect. We had so, so much conversation, so many ideas, and it's all thought provoking.

**Eve:** So that's the process. I guess in terms of the actual outputs and suggestions, is there anything for you that you're leaving today going, oh, I'd really love to see that happen now. And feeling a sense of responsibility to try, even if it goes beyond your job title, your remit, to see there's some way that you can influence that to make it happen.

**Jo:** I definitely have a sense of responsibility as a woman in Trafford and as a mom of a nineteen-year-old in Trafford, to make that commitment to make the street safer for women and girls. So I will definitely be taking forward my pledge to make contact with the mayor's office and other policy makers to see how we can genuinely make some of those ideas a reality.

**Dom:** Yeah, there are lots of fantastic ideas about different commitments from different sectors, like the public sector and the VCSE sector. I think there's a real role as well for all employers and all employers, and I think that's a really great opportunity for all of Manchester.

**Bob:** For me also is, to build on that, is to encourage this sort of idea process more too, to make sure that we're continuing to hear what people who go through these experiences think. How those solutions I propose materialise and just continue to get to all thoughts, opinions, engagement and ideas.

**Eve:** Katy, go on then. What, for you has already, anything that's already shifted or changed the consequence, and what would you like to see going forward?

**Katy:** Well, I always want to see the things that were promised happen. First because we need those changes in Trafford and Greater Manchester and for a Right To The Streets for everyone. And because that's how democracy should work, right? That if commitments were made in front of people from people's ideas and experiences that we need that accountability and that, going back to Mike's point about trust and that's the first step towards trust, and the key step is that the things happen.

But also I'm biased about Legislative Theatre and more broadly fun, participatory, change making, and one of the other actors, one of the young people said at the end of the show, just seeing all the policymakers there listening to us. I felt so important. I felt like prime minister, she said. And I think that there's a movement here.

There's a Right To The Streets movement, and there's a growing movement that, that involving Legislative Theatre in Right To The Streets and, and, all the ways that it's been happening in Greater Manchester in particular is showing this progress that we believe that every human being is a policymaker and is a decision maker and is a policy expert in that we all are living here and we all know what it is to live here.

And we're all impacted by these rules and policies and practices and laws. And therefore we know how they work or don't work. And therefore we also know how the new ideas will or won't work. And we're already walking down the street all the time with ideas about what could be different.

And so what now I dream of continuing to break down the difference, right, between policymaker and resident until, all of us who've just now come into the GMCA offices for our first time actually would be here all the time because part of our job as residents would be to come here and make rules and test them and see how they work and evaluate them and have that power always and not just on one day of the year.

**Eve:** I would love to see you all here all of the time and others. Yeah, seriously. Wow. Wow. Wow. Goosebumps just, yeah, thank you so much. I've loved this conversation. I've loved the process. I've loved working with you all, massive shout out to the whole cast. Everyone has been involved in making this happen because it was phenomenal, and very well received and I'm sure it is just the end of the beginning of far more that's going to come. So thank you very, very much. I know you all need to jump on buses and bikes and yeah, get your active souls in gear and get on with your journeys, but thank you for coming here today and you're welcome back here anytime.

**Katy:** Thank you.

**Nadia:** Thank you.

Mike: Thank you.

**Outro**

**Eve:** Goosebumps again. I loved that conversation and I loved the process and working with everyone. A massive shout out to the whole cast and everyone who's involved in making this happen because as you just heard it was phenomenal.

I see lots and lots throughout the Right to the Streets podcast series that this was just the end of the beginning and it really is because the ongoing ripples are phenomenal. Since the Legislative Theatre performance took place there's already been progress on a number of fronts. For example, Transport for Greater Manchester have now installed the QR codes linking directly to live chat on the back of tram seats.

This enables people to report any incidents they're having of harassment whilst travelling around safely. Messages and posters have also been put up across the Greater Manchester Transport Network calling out sexual harassment. For example, stating that catcalling is sexual harassment and they're now looking at how they can further spread active bystander training across the workforce.

GM4Women has stepped up its focus on allyship to include sessions at all future events, supporting more men and boys to play their full role as allies. And we are collaborating with Greater Manchester Combined Authority on the Is This Okay campaign, combating harassment. And they're drawing on the Right To The Streets learning to help spread active bystander messages and training, which is fantastic.

So that's it for this episode. A huge thanks for listening. Keep a lookout as the ripples continue. Legislative theatre is just one of a number of tools and techniques that we use to facilitate people's participation through the Right to the Streets work. Different methods work well, depending on the purpose, the people involved, the time and the space available.

If you are looking to facilitate a participatory process, be that for policy making or for other outcomes, the time spent designing a good process that you can then trust is time very well spent. Think fun? Be creative and design in the space and flexibility for things to shift and change and for new ideas to emerge.

This podcast and the whole of the Right To The Streets project is just the start of the conversation. So we'd love to hear from you. Have you tried and tested different forms of participatory policymaking or decision-making assistance assembly, maybe, or participatory budgeting? What's your experience?

Let us know, and we'll share your thoughts on future episodes of this podcast. We've got a few ways you can get in touch. You can tell us on social media, we're on LinkedIn and Twitter. Simply search GM Moving, or you can drop us an email. Just head to our website at gmmoving.co.uk and hit the contact button.

Finally, a big thanks to everyone who has contributed to this episode. This Right to the Streets series, the GM Moving podcast, is one element of the Right to the Streets project, led by Greater Manchester Moving, Trafford Council, Open Data Manchester and GM Moving Partners. Thanks again to funding from the Home Office for Safer Streets, alongside partners Trafford Council.

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