

Climate ACTION PLAN

FOR THE NEXT MAYOR OF LONDON

10 priorities to protect
people and planet

Climate ACTION PLAN

We're facing a climate and ecological emergency – the biggest threat we've ever seen to humanity's existence. The latest report from the UK's Climate Change Committee shows that we urgently need to ramp up delivery of the solutions, and that many of these solutions will require local action. The UK is also failing to build resilience to the worsening impacts of climate change, putting people at growing risk from extreme weather, health issues, food insecurity and more.

Whoever is elected as the next Mayor can't single-handedly solve the crisis, but they must use the powers they have to make as big a difference as possible. They have a very important role to play in providing a guiding vision for the area, and will need to work with councils, businesses, local communities and the national government.

Tackling the climate and nature crisis must be done in a way that benefits everyone, no matter their income, race, age or background. It's important to address the sheer scale of inequalities that exist.

People who are most marginalised – both here in the UK and across the world – have done the least to cause climate breakdown but are the least able to recover from its impacts.

People on lower incomes, disabled people and people of colour suffer most from the lack of nature and green space in our towns and cities. This is also true of air pollution, despite a lower proportion of people on lower incomes and people of colour owning cars than others.

Young people's futures are most at risk from climate breakdown and the decline of nature, and they're also economically disadvantaged, for example by the cost of housing.

London has had a Zero Carbon London plan in place since 2018 and has since set an ambitious target to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. In Climate Emergency UK's Council Climate Action Scorecards, which assessed all UK councils on the actions they've taken towards net zero, the

Greater London Authority (GLA) achieved the joint highest score for combined authorities (although the GLA's powers and resourcing aren't directly comparable to Mayoral Combined Authorities). But even where commitments have been made, such as to create more green jobs and roll out housing retrofit, the delivery urgently needs to be accelerated.

The next Mayor must build on existing commitments across the area, accelerate delivery of the actions committed to and tackle inequalities. They must also regularly report on progress towards carbon reduction and nature restoration goals.

This Climate Action Plan will help the next Mayor do this using the devolved powers and funding granted to them. They'll also have an important role in influencing and co-ordinating action by the 32 London boroughs, local businesses and other stakeholders.

Even with the additional powers and resources already granted to the Mayor of London, we acknowledge that some barriers to action remain due to unhelpful national policies, continued reliance on competitive funding streams and inadequate powers to raise funds locally. To address this, the next Mayor should use their voice to campaign for national government to put the climate crisis at the heart of devolution deals and give local government the powers and resources needed to act at the scale required.

10 priorities the next Mayor of London should commit to

The 10 priorities listed below build on those we set out for the mayoral elections in 2021. In the following section, we explain in more detail what each means for London in practice.

- 1 Decision making:** ensure all plans, programmes and investment decisions are in line with what's needed to address the climate and ecological emergency and are aligned with international, national, regional and local carbon reduction targets. This includes through divesting all pension funds the Mayor and GLA are responsible for from fossil fuels.
- 2 People:** set up and actively promote forums to ensure that the voices of those most impacted by climate breakdown and nature loss – including disabled people, people of colour and people on low incomes – are heard and given centre-stage in decision making.
- 3 Green jobs and skills:** rapidly increase the number of skilled green jobs, and protect workers and communities through a just transition to a low-carbon, nature-rich, circular economy. This includes creating opportunities for young people to develop green skills and linking skills training to attractive, well-paid, low-carbon jobs.
- 4 New housing:** use the London Plan and other powers to ensure new housing is zero carbon and served by sustainable transport. Use brownfield regeneration and affordable housing funding to deliver zero-carbon homes in locations with good public transport links and opportunities for active travel, while protecting the green belt from development.
- 5 Retrofitting homes:** take a leading role in bringing existing homes in the area up to high energy efficiency standards (at least EPC C) to reduce emissions and put an end to fuel poverty. Ensure that existing homes are protected from extreme weather events.
- 6 Transport:** reduce road traffic by 25% by 2030 to achieve net zero targets. This can be achieved by significantly increasing cycling and walking, moving to 20 mph speed limits on all residential side roads and in town centres, and working with operators to ensure that public transport services are reliable, affordable and better connected.
- 7 Energy:** commit to a low-demand, decentralised supply of energy in the London Energy Plan. Increase the supply of clean, renewable energy, including supporting the goal of 1,000 community energy projects by 2030 and the roll-out of heat pumps.
- 8 Nature:** declare a biodiversity emergency. Ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the area increases tree cover, protects and enhances nature so that 75% of protected wildlife sites are thriving by 2042, eliminates green space deprivation, and helps the area become more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- 9 Waste:** commit to making London a zero-waste city, with no compostable or recyclable waste sent to landfill or incineration. Lead the development of a circular economy strategy with local businesses and local authorities to both drastically cut waste and resource consumption and boost the green economy.
- 10 Air quality and water:** work with businesses and communities to ensure that interim World Health Organization (WHO) air quality guidelines are met by 2030 and that water consumption is cut by 30% by 2050.

What this looks like for London

1

Decision making: ensure all plans, programmes and investment decisions are in line with what's needed to address the climate and ecological emergency and are aligned with international, national, regional and local carbon reduction targets. This includes through divesting all pension funds the Mayor and GLA are responsible for from fossil fuels.

All decisions need to be in line with what's needed to address the climate and ecological emergency. Commitments to tackle the crisis are meaningless if they're contradicted by spending on and support for high-carbon activity. All plans and investment spending must align with the need to cut emissions and increase the resilience of the area to climate impacts. Local government pension schemes must also stop investing in climate-wrecking gas, oil and coal companies.

Practical action

The Mayor must ensure that spending of the strategic investment fund, and any devolved funding pots under their control like the Shared Prosperity Fund, is aligned with moving to a low-carbon economy.

The Mayor should ensure that all plans, including the London Industrial Strategy, set the area on a path of fair transition to clean, green industry that will help cut climate change

emissions and boost growth in green jobs.

This also means ending the promotion of or investment in high-carbon infrastructure such as new roads. Additional actions to promote low-carbon transport and buildings are set out in the relevant sections below.

The Mayor should divest all pension funds they and the GLA are responsible for from fossil fuels.

2

People: set up and actively promote forums to ensure that the voices of those impacted most by climate breakdown and nature loss – including disabled people, people of colour and people on low incomes – are heard and given centre-stage in decision making.

The Mayor should recognise that those who've done the least to contribute to climate breakdown are often the most vulnerable to its impacts.

In the Greater London Authority area, 564 neighbourhoods have been identified by researchers as being particularly vulnerable to surface flooding due to their location and the demographics of the community (for example, age or income). In addition, 1,537 neighbourhoods have been identified as being particularly vulnerable to the impacts of extreme heat. Flooding and extreme heat will both be exacerbated by climate breakdown.

Practical action

The Mayor must commit to involving all citizens, but especially young people and the most

vulnerable communities, in decision making and action planning.

The Mayor must also recognise the impact of decisions made today on the wellbeing of future generations and commit to having youth representation on the governance structures within the region.

Deliberative democracy approaches, such as citizen juries, citizen assemblies, and

participatory mapping and budgeting, should be used, especially for complicated or contentious choices.

Climate change adaptation and nature restoration spending should be focused on the most vulnerable communities.

3 Green jobs and skills: rapidly increase the number of skilled green jobs, and protect workers and communities through a just transition to a low-carbon, nature-rich, circular economy. This includes creating opportunities for young people to develop green skills and linking skills training to attractive, well-paid, low-carbon jobs.

Green jobs and training will both be necessary to achieve any credible sustainable vision and economic plan for the region. The green economy is already the fastest growing part of the UK economy, and action in this area will benefit the region.

Mayors will need to make sure they understand the projected demand for green skills in their areas, including for fitting insulation and heat pumps, installing electric vehicle charging points and restoring nature. These skills should be a key focus of adult education budget spending.

Practical action

The Mayor must accelerate implementation of the Green New Deal to invest in green jobs, apprenticeships and sustainable enterprise. This means prioritising investment in sectors such as renewable energy, housing retrofit, sustainable transport, nature restoration and the circular economy.

The Mayor should use their control of the area's adult education budget to ensure the labour

force has the necessary skills to enable the transition to a low-carbon economy.

The Mayor should also work with youth representatives, trade unions, colleges, training providers, businesses and the youth climate movement to devise an ambitious programme of skills training and apprenticeships for the green economy.

4 New housing: use the London Plan and other powers to ensure new housing is zero carbon and served by sustainable transport. Use brownfield regeneration and affordable housing funding to deliver zero-carbon homes in locations with good public transport links and opportunities for active travel, while protecting the green belt from development.

It makes no sense to build new homes today that will need retrofitting in the near future, or that any new development is dependent on cars for transport. The next Mayor should use strategic policies in the London Plan and their powers to make decisions on major development to ensure

environmental standards for new development. The London boroughs' Local Plans will then need to be consistent with these strategic policies.

Practical action

The Mayor should use the London Plan to ensure planning policies in the area are fully aligned with national carbon reduction targets and carbon budgets – including requiring new housing to be zero carbon. This should include requiring high energy efficiency standards to be applied to all new housing developments, with clear guidance issued to builders to go beyond current building regulations.

The Mayor should also co-ordinate spatial and transport planning at the regional level to

ensure that new developments are accessible by sustainable transport, and have access to nature-rich green space.

Funds for new housing such as the Brownfield Housing Fund must be used to deliver affordable, healthy homes that are built to high energy efficiency standards, are protected from overheating and flooding, aren't built around transport by car, and result in an overall gain in green space and biodiversity.

5 **Retrofitting homes: take a leading role in bringing existing homes in the area up to high energy efficiency standards (at least EPC C) to reduce emissions and put an end to fuel poverty. Ensure that existing homes are protected from extreme weather events.**

Most of the buildings that people will use over the next 50 years have already been built. Only 49% of homes in London are currently well insulated. This represents a shocking waste of energy, with high greenhouse gas emissions and unnecessarily high energy bills, especially for more vulnerable low-income renters.

241,860 homes need to be insulated every year in London to ensure all homes are properly insulated by 2030. It's estimated that it'll cost a total of £13.4 billion to get all homes to EPC band C. A significant proportion of this will need to be publicly funded because a large proportion of householders are unable to pay themselves. In addition, the transition from gas-fired boilers to eco-heating systems needs to be well underway in our homes. In London, at least 83,100 heat pumps need to be fitted every year until 2030.

As well as ensuring that homes are well insulated to end fuel poverty and improve health, we need to move to electric heating that's powered by renewable sources.

Practical action

The Mayor will have a key role to play in working with local authorities, housing associations and other partners, helping to secure government funding to retrofit cold homes that are expensive to heat. The Mayor is uniquely placed to co-ordinate a street-by-street retrofit programme across all types of housing tenures, prioritising neighbourhoods with high levels of fuel poverty.

Mayoral authorities should also support private homeowners and landlords who are able to pay for retrofit themselves – for example by establishing retrofit hubs for energy saving advice as well as information on financial support and reliable suppliers.

The Mayor should take a leading role in protecting against extreme weather, working with partners across the area to ensure that

homes are more resilient to the impacts of climate change such as flooding and overheating.

6 Transport: reduce road traffic by 25% by 2030 to achieve net zero targets. This can be achieved by significantly increasing cycling and walking, moving to 20 mph speed limits on all residential side roads and in town centres, and working with operators to ensure that public transport services are reliable, affordable and better connected.

In the Greater London Authority area, 53% of commuter journeys are made using public transport. Bus services have increased slightly by 3% when compared with 2010 levels.

Although there's higher use of public transport than in other UK cities, there's still room for improvement so that using public transport or cycling and walking become the default. Everybody should be able to live decently and get about without having to own a car. In London, 42% of households don't have access to a car or van. Access to decent car alternatives is a social justice and cohesion issue, as well as an environmental issue.

Enabling people to get around with minimum impact on the environment will also bring about big improvements in air quality. World Health Organization (WHO) standards are set to reduce the health impacts of air pollution – they're evidence based and regularly updated in line with new research. Air pollution is a real problem across the area and WHO guidelines for the toxic gas nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) are breached in at least 4,833 locations. Fine particulate matter (PM) air pollution is very damaging to health, yet there are 1,509 neighbourhoods in London where levels of PM_{2.5} are double WHO guidelines. There are also 3,210 schools in neighbourhoods that have concerning levels of air pollution.

Practical action

The Mayor should work with Transport for London to continue to improve bus services so that fares are affordable, routes match what local people need, and services are delivered by electric buses. In addition, the Mayor needs to ensure ongoing improvements to integrated public transport services and maintain tickets that work across different modes of transport, such as the one-day travelcard.

The Mayor has a key role to play working with local authorities to co-ordinate the provision of joined-up active travel infrastructure. London needs to do much better on providing safe cycling routes. Research shows that with good cycling infrastructure, such as segregated cycleways, and the uptake of e-bikes, 28% of commuter journeys in London could be made

by bike. A comprehensive network of safe, segregated cycle routes should be the goal – like those in Copenhagen, Denmark, where 49% of journeys for work and education are made by bike. Efforts should be made to build community support for these changes and to consult in advance about new routes and measures.

The Mayor must protect the health of local people and commit to scaling up action to ensure air quality standards are met across the whole of London. This will require a firm commitment to ongoing measures like the ULEZ to stop the use of the most polluting vehicles and to encourage the take-up of electric vehicles, as well as measures to facilitate alternative ways to travel.

Additional money to achieve this transformation in transport can be raised through schemes like the Workplace Parking Levy successfully

pioneered by Nottingham City Council. The next Mayor should urge the London boroughs to introduce similar levies.

7 Energy: commit to a low-demand, decentralised supply of energy in the London Energy Plan. Increase the supply of clean, renewable energy, including supporting the goal of 1,000 community energy projects by 2030 and the roll-out of heat pumps.

A rapid growth in renewable energy is needed to wean the UK off electricity produced by fossil fuels and to increasingly provide the electricity needed to heat homes, cut fuel bills and power transport. By making space for renewable energy like rooftop solar panels and onshore wind turbines, a proportion of this clean and affordable energy can be provided in London.

Currently, 344,740 MWh of onshore renewable energy is generated in London each year – a very small fraction of what’s needed. This is only enough to power the equivalent of 127,680 homes.

Practical action

The Mayor should lead the development and implementation of the London Energy Plan to deliver sustainable energy infrastructure and renewable energy production in partnership with local authorities, communities and energy utilities. Community ownership of renewable energy should be particularly encouraged and supported.

The Mayor should work with London boroughs that are developing Local Area Energy Plans to ensure a co-ordinated approach. The London

Energy Plan should also be linked to the London Plan 2021 and the London boroughs’ Local Plans to ensure that opportunities for new renewable energy generation are identified. The London Energy Plan should identify priority locations for the roll-out of heat pumps, including where grid infrastructure can handle these now and where they need to come later.

In addition, all public purchasing of energy should be from 100% renewable power.

8 Nature: declare a biodiversity emergency. Ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the area increases tree cover, protects and enhances nature so that 75% of protected wildlife sites are thriving by 2042, eliminates green space deprivation, and helps the area become more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Nature in England is in decline. Pressures from farming, pollution and badly located development continue to put our wildlife at risk and undermine the functioning of healthy ecosystems. London is home to over 14,000 different types of plants and animals, but some are struggling. For example, the London Wildlife Trust has reported that there’s only one population of hedgehogs left in Central London.

Access to quality green space is essential for people’s physical and mental health. Green space, trees and other “green infrastructure” are also essential for nature. Friends of the Earth has used

official data on green space, gardens and open access land to identify the neighbourhoods most deprived of green space in the region. Results show that low-income communities and people of colour are worst off when it comes to access to green space. In the GLA area, there are 462 neighbourhoods rated E (most deprived).

Practical action

In London, the Mayor and the GLA are responsible for developing a LNRS. The next Mayor needs to accelerate action to help declining wildlife species. The London LNRS should set out how it'll protect and manage nature sites that are important for people and wildlife, as well as restore nature and ecosystems across the area. This includes planting more trees and woods on land owned by local authorities and in partnerships with local landowners. Friends of the Earth has produced a [map identifying where new](#)

[woodlands could be planted](#) outside of urban areas.

The Mayor should also aim to eliminate green space deprivation. This means ensuring everybody has access to enough quality green space. In some areas this might mean opening up school grounds outside of school hours or converting some streets or car parks into public green space. It also means increasing tree cover with more street trees.

9 Waste: commit to making London a zero-waste city, with no compostable or recyclable waste sent to landfill or incineration. Lead the development of a circular economy strategy with local businesses and local authorities to both drastically cut waste and resource consumption and boost the green economy.

London should aim to create a zero-waste, circular economy – in which resources are used for as long as possible, have the maximum value extracted from them, and are recovered and regenerated at the end of their service life.

Only 33% of household waste in London is reused, recycled or composted. Incineration, also called Energy from Waste, isn't a sustainable alternative as it's more carbon polluting than even gas-fired power stations, and it also contributes to local air pollution.

Practical action

The Mayor should work with businesses and community groups to increase the reuse and repair of products in the area, including influencing businesses to select more sustainable materials, improve the design of products and extend product life cycles. Circular economy principles should also be applied to local authority procurement of goods.

The Mayor should also support and co-ordinate local authorities in the area to ensure 70% of household waste is reused, recycled or composted by 2025, and to achieve zero waste by 2030. This needs to include initiatives to reduce food waste and introduce doorstep food waste recycling across the region, and make it easier for people and businesses to stop sending waste to landfill or incineration.

10

Air quality and water: work with businesses and communities to ensure that interim World Health Organization (WHO) air quality guidelines are met by 2030 and that water consumption is cut by 30% by 2050.

As outlined in priority 6, air quality is a health risk across all London boroughs. Air quality improvements are needed to reduce these health risks and cut costs to the NHS.

Many of London's rivers are polluted, contributing to biodiversity loss. London and parts of the South East are also at high risk of being water-stressed, meaning that the supply of water will be below demand. Reducing water consumption will help avoid expensive investment in water supply solutions and lower water bills.

Practical action

In addition to the actions in priority 6, the Mayor should lead on improving reporting on air quality monitoring data against UK and WHO air quality guidelines, ensuring transparency and accessibility so that residents are informed. Air quality monitoring should also incorporate Breathe London monitoring data. The Mayor should commit to continued support for the Breathe London network and greater community involvement in air quality monitoring.

The Mayor should lead work with water authorities, councils and other organisations to ensure that our rivers, streams and waterways are healthy and sustainable, and to help protect our environment from the over-abstraction of water.

The Mayor should use the London Plan and retrofit programmes to help reduce water consumption in existing housing and new developments, aiming for a 30% reduction by 2050.

Methodology

Friends of the Earth has drawn on official sources of data to identify progress on climate and nature issues in metro mayoral areas. Where official data sources aren't available, we've relied on alternative quality sources. Below we list our data sources and explain what analysis of them we've carried out, if any.

Extreme weather

Professor Sarah Lindley at the University of Manchester has carried out an analysis for Friends of the Earth to identify which small neighbourhoods – Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) with an average population of 1,700 – are both likely to be exposed to extreme weather and have demographic/ neighbourhood characteristics that make the population particularly vulnerable. More detail is available on [extreme heat](#) and [flooding](#).

Homes

The number of poorly insulated homes is based on government data on [energy performance certificates](#). There are a range of data sources on the cost of bringing properties up to a decent standard (EPC C level), including the [English Housing Survey](#). The actual costs will be influenced by

the approach taken. For example, Friends of the Earth is advocating a street-by-street approach, which is likely to bring cost savings compared with approaches that require retrofitters to consistently travel between jobs. The target number of heat pumps to be fitted is based on the number recommended by the Climate Change Committee for the whole of the UK, adjusted for the number of homes within the metro mayoral region.

Transport

The proportion of commuter journeys by different travel modes is based on 2011 Census data. Unfortunately, more up-to-date data isn't available. However, the situation today is unlikely to be significantly different because of bus service decline outside of London. The data on [bus service decline](#) is from an analysis by the University of Leeds for Friends of the Earth. The data on access to a car is from the [2021 Census](#). The data on the proportion of commuter journeys that could be made by bike is from the [Propensity to Cycle Tool](#).

Air pollution

Air pollution data is based on a Friends of the Earth analysis of [modelling data at 1 km² published by the government](#). Our analysis involved using geographical boundary data for small neighbourhoods (LSOAs) to calculate an average level of air pollution within the neighbourhood and compare this with WHO limits. We've also identified the number of schools within areas with high air pollution levels using government data on school locations. More detail is available on [air pollution](#).

Renewable energy

The amount of onshore renewable energy generated in the region is identified by [government data](#). The calculation of how many homes-worth of energy this equates to is based on [typical household consumption figures](#) published by the energy regulator Ofgem. In future, more renewable electricity will be needed to heat homes and power transport, reducing the usage of fossil fuels. Total energy consumption will reduce in the future as electric heat pumps and electric cars are much more energy efficient than equivalents powered by fossil fuels.

Green space

Friends of the Earth has identified the neighbourhoods deprived of green space by combining government data on public green space, garden size and open access land and ranking neighbourhoods on a scale of A-E. Within this Climate Action Plan, we've referred to E-rated neighbourhoods as green-space deprived. More detail, including the methodology, is available in the [full analysis](#), which was carried out in 2020. The underlying government data we relied on isn't perfect, so ground truthing is necessary. Natural England is working to improve the data and is expected to publish more data in spring 2024.

Waste

Data on household waste recycling is from [government data](#).