

# CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

**FOR METRO MAYORS  
SHEFFIELD CITY REGION**

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**A plan to tackle the climate and  
nature emergency.**

# CLIMATE ACTION PLAN FOR METRO MAYORS

## Sheffield City Region

We're facing a climate emergency – the biggest threat we've ever seen to humanity's existence.

The challenge of curbing the impacts of climate breakdown will require local councils, communities and national government to work together. And while the Mayor of the Sheffield City Region can't singlehandedly solve the crisis, they have important powers they need to use to ensure Sheffield is as climate friendly as possible.

### What the Mayor can do:

We call on all Metro Mayor to take inspiration from the Mayors of the C40Cities Network, who are ensuring that their areas benefit from leading the transition to a cleaner, healthier low carbon future. The Mayor must recognise that the climate emergency cannot be tackled through a "business as usual" approach, and that younger generations are relying on today's leaders to secure their futures. Where national or international government inaction risks holding back progress, we need bold leaders committed to realising a more climate friendly vision for their region.

The Mayor must be ready to work with other Metro Mayors, local authorities and allies to secure more regulatory powers, fundraising powers and finance to take radical action to avert climate breakdown. They will need to join forces to push for a climate action plan that is commensurate with the climate and nature emergency, and use their influence to hold national government to account.

**In this briefing we outline a vision for the Sheffield City Region, pointing to evidence of the need for change and identifying the practical actions needed to realise this vision. This includes commitments on:**

- 1** Ensuring all infrastructure plans, programmes and investment decisions are in line with the climate emergency, the city region's carbon budget and the carbon reduction pathway.
- 2** Putting the voices of those impacted most by climate breakdown centre stage in decision making.
- 3** Protecting workers and communities through a just transition to a low carbon, circular economy.
- 4** Introducing the policies and measures necessary to ensure new development is zero carbon and to bring existing homes up to high energy standards, thereby relegating fuel poverty to the history books.
- 5** At minimum, doubling the use of public transport, cycling and walking within the next 10 years to cut carbon emissions and ensure everyone can breathe clean air.
- 6** Powering the city region by clean, renewable energy and reaping the economic and job opportunities that this brings, while ensuring fossil fuels are kept in the ground.
- 7** Becoming a zero waste city region by 2030 without reliance on landfill or incineration to reduce pressures on nature from resource extraction and pollution.
- 8** Greening the city region through doubling tree cover and protecting nature, aiding people's wellbeing.
- 9** Calling on the local government pension scheme to divest from fossil fuels in order to stop profiting from environmental harm.

## What that looks like:

### **1 All infrastructure plans, programmes and investment decisions will be in line with the climate emergency, the city region's carbon budget and carbon reduction pathway**

Currently across the country too many councils and combined authorities are simultaneously declaring climate emergencies while promoting more high carbon infrastructure such as new roads. They also continue to promote high carbon activities such as aviation. The old adage, "when in a hole stop digging", is apt. All decisions need to be made in line with the climate and ecological emergency.

#### **Practical action:**

In identifying how to avoid future infrastructure contributing to climate breakdown, also consider the potential to have a positive impact on climate and nature.

The Metro Mayor should work with partners to deliver on scientifically robust carbon budgets and to ensure that the region's greenhouse gas emissions reduce in line with the scientific evidence, without a reliance on carbon offsetting. This will involve working with local councils, the business sector, public services, trade unions, universities, and civic society to identify and deliver an ambitious carbon pathway that delivers the cuts in carbon emissions needed while boosting the economy and public health.

The Metro Mayor should use their influence within the region and at national level to ensure this pathway is fully resourced.

All decisions on new and existing plans must then be informed by analysis which identifies whether they are aligned to this carbon pathway for the Sheffield City Region.

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### **2 The voices of those impacted most by climate breakdown will be heard and centre stage in decision making**

In the Sheffield City Region 313 neighbourhoods have been identified by researchers as being particularly vulnerable to surface flooding, due to their location and the demographic of the community (for example, age or income). Flooding and extreme heat will all be exacerbated by climate breakdown. It must also be recognised that those who have done least to contribute to climate breakdown are often the most vulnerable to the effects of it.

#### **Practical action:**

The Mayor must commit to involving all citizens, but especially young people and the most vulnerable communities, in decision making on climate solutions.

They 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 city region.

Deliberative democracy approaches such as citizen juries, citizen assemblies, participatory mapping and participatory budgeting should be used, especially for complicated or contentious choices.

Climate adaptation spending should be focused on the most vulnerable communities.

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### **3 Workers and communities will be protected through a just transition to a low carbon, circular economy**

Green jobs and training will both be necessary to achieve any credible climate vision and 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. Developing green industry, jobs and training programmes are essential to

the future of Sheffield.

According to analysis by the Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy, The Sheffield city region spends a total of £3.2 billion each year on its energy and fuel bills.

If the region invested in all of the profitable energy efficiency and low carbon options, total energy bills would be cut by £753 million a year. Doing this would lead to the creation of an extra 10,081 years of employment in the area, and would mean the area's carbon emissions would fall by 23% over and above what is already expected.<sup>1</sup>

### **Practical action:**

The Mayor should invest in green jobs, apprenticeships and sustainable enterprise, leaving no communities behind.

They should ensure all plans, investments and decisions build the green economy in sectors such as renewable energy, housing retrofit, sustainable transport and the circular economy.

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**4**

## **All new developments will be zero carbon and existing homes will be brought up to high energy standards thereby relegating fuel poverty to the history books**

Any new homes and developments need to be built as zero carbon. But most of the buildings that people will use over the next 50 years have already been built. Only 36% of homes are currently well insulated in the Sheffield City Region, and this represents a shocking waste of energy, high greenhouse gas emissions and unnecessarily high energy bills.

12% of households in the area are in fuel poverty, which means they can't afford to heat their homes properly. Poor insulation contributes to this problem.

And yet the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) proposed Future Homes Standards are actually proposing to restrict local planning authorities from setting higher energy efficiency standard for dwellings. The Mayor needs to use his influence with HCLG to ensure that councils in South Yorkshire and across the country have all the powers and resources they need to respond to the climate emergency.

The Mayor must also resist the call from the gas industry to move onto hydrogen made from natural gas. Unlike making hydrogen from renewable energy, the process of making it from natural gas is dirty. As all the carbon pollution can't be captured, and fugitive emissions from gas extraction and transportation remain. It also won't be practically possible for at least ten years because there are no existing carbon storage facilities. Ten years is the period within which we need to cut carbon emissions quickly. Energy efficiency, heat pumps and heat batteries are a much more sustainable solution and ready right now. If hydrogen is used in transport, industry and heating, then the Mayor should insist on it being produced using renewable energy.

### **Practical action:**

37,423 homes need to be insulated every year within the Sheffield City Region to ensure all homes are properly insulated by 2030.

In addition, the transition away from gas fired boilers in our homes to eco heating systems needs to be well underway. At least 21,454 heat pumps need to be fitted every year in the city region.

All new development must be zero carbon, including all housing as standard, starting immediately.

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## 5

# Public transport use, cycling and walking will be doubled within the next 10 years to cut climate emissions and ensure everyone can breathe clean air

The Sheffield City Region must achieve a dramatic change to the city region's transport infrastructure and travel habits so that using public transport or cycling and walking become the default. Enabling people to get around with minimum impact on the environment will also bring about big improvements in air quality.

Air pollution is a real problem across the area and limits are breached in at least 86 locations for the toxic gas Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). Many towns and cities across the UK fail World Health Organisation standards for the most health damaging pollutant, fine Particle Matter (PM), including within this Metro Mayoral area.

The Mayor must protect the health of local people and commit to taking the necessary action to ensure World Health Organisation Air Quality standards are met across the whole city region by 2030.

Everybody in the Sheffield City Region should be able to live decently without having to own or drive a car. Across the UK almost 50% of the lowest income families (people in the bottom 20% income bracket) do not have access to a car. The proportion of women that do not have access to a car is double that of men. Decent public transport is a social cohesion and social justice issue as well as an environmental issue.

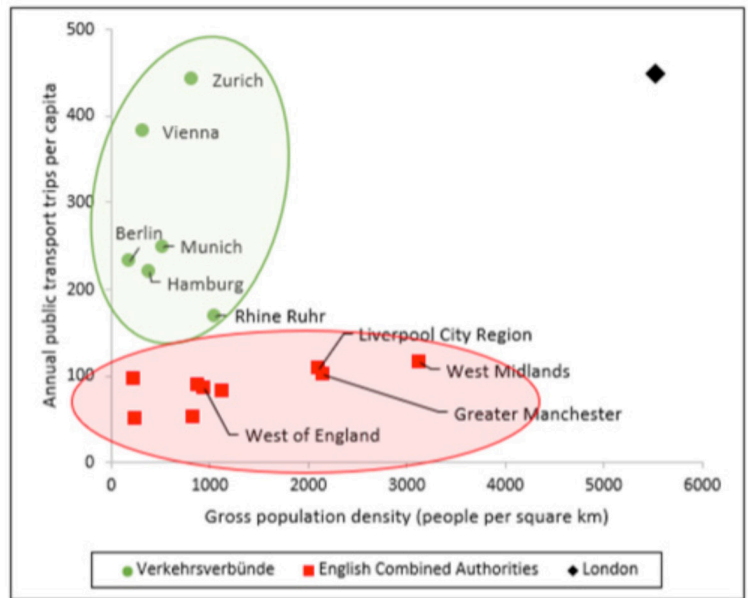
In mainland Europe many places provide much better public transport. As a result, levels of public transport use are 3 to 4 times higher than they are in the UK's combined authority areas (see graph<sup>2</sup>).

### Practical action:

To achieve a doubling of public transport use, and cycling and walking, barriers to a decent transport system need to be removed. The Mayor should call for additional powers to re-regulate buses/develop a franchise system, or commit to implementing these powers where they are already in place. In mainland Europe some regions also control suburban trains as well as buses.

Sheffield can also do much better on providing safe cycling routes. Research shows that 23% of commuter journeys in the city region could be by bike with good cycling infrastructure, such as segregated cycleways, and the uptake of E-bikes. A comprehensive network of safe segregated cycle routes like the levels planned in Copenhagen, Denmark, should be the goal.

Currently only around 27% of journeys in the Sheffield City Region are by walking, cycling and public transport. As a minimum, the Mayor should work to increase this to 58% by 2030. Money to achieve this transformation can be raised through schemes like the Workplace Parking Levy successfully pioneered by Nottingham City Council.



Annual per capita public transport trips in six continental Verkehrsverbände (Transport Authorities), the English Combined Authorities, and London

## 6

# The Sheffield City Region will be powered by clean, renewable energy and reap the economic and job opportunities that this brings, while ensuring fossil fuels are kept in the ground

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 and power transport. A proportion of this renewable energy can be provided in the Sheffield City Region.

### **Practical action:**

Sustainable energy infrastructure and renewable energy production must be delivered across the region in partnership with local authorities, communities and energy utilities.

Currently only 255GWh of renewable energy is generated in the Sheffield City Region. This is equal to only 5% of household energy use. If every council area within the region matched the best of similar areas then in total 3,156 GWh would be produced.

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

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## **7 The city region will be zero waste by 2030 without reliance on landfill or incineration to reduce pressures on nature from resource extraction and pollution**

Only 40% of household waste in Sheffield is reused, recycled or composted. The best local authorities in Wales are achieving more than 70%.

Incineration, also called Energy from Waste, is not a sustainable alternative as it is more carbon polluting than even gas fired power stations, and it contributes to local air pollution.

### **Practical action:**

The Sheffield City Region should aim for 70% of household waste to be reused, recycled or composted by 2025, and to achieve zero waste by 2030.

The Mayor should also bring in doorstep food waste recycling across the city region and make it easier for people and businesses to stop sending waste to landfill or incineration.

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## **8 The greening of the city region will be achieved through doubling tree cover and protecting nature, aiding people's wellbeing**

The benefits trees provide for the climate, air quality, wildlife, people's wellbeing and flood management must be recognised.

Research recommends a minimum of 20% tree cover in urban areas. Currently the Sheffield City Region has 10% - 20% tree cover.

### **Practical action:**

The city region should double tree cover within the area by 2045, including through growing more trees and woods on council-owned land, and should call on government to provide more funding for councils to increase tree cover.

The Mayor should work to dramatically increase biodiversity in the city region, properly protect and enhance the green belt and existing green spaces and ensure all communities – rich or poor – have access to nature.

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## **9 Local government pension schemes will have divested from fossil fuels**

Local government pension schemes are fuelling the climate emergency by investing in climate wrecking gas, oil and coal companies. As investments are made in these damaging industries here, climate breakdown is getting worse around the world, and people from some of the poorest countries are having to flee their homes due to extreme weather.

## **Practical action:**

The Mayor should make public statements calling on local government pensions schemes to divest from fossil fuels and engage directly with authorities that control these funds, encouraging them to make immediate commitments to divest from all fossil fuels.

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## **THE NORTH OF TYNE MAYORAL POWERS**

The Metro Mayor has some important powers they need to use to effectively tackle the climate emergency. Details of these powers can be found in the Devolution Deal drawn up between central government and the local authorities. However, this deal has yet to be implemented with some progress being made towards this earlier in 2019. More details on the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority's work can be found on its website.

In September 2019, Sheffield City Region's Combined Authority declared a Climate Emergency and are working to set a target date for reaching net-zero emissions.

### **Notes:**

Detail on the methodology, data sources and targets is available at: <https://takeclimateaction.uk/climate-action/methodology-local-authority-data-project>

1. The Place-Based Climate Action Network is a joint initiative of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the LSE, the University of Leeds, the University of Belfast, and the University of Edinburgh.  
See: <https://pcancities.org.uk/find-your-place>
2. The graph is taken from 'A radical transport response to the climate emergency by Transport for Quality of Life, Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace' at: <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/radical-transport-response-climate-emergency>