

# CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

**FOR THE NEXT MAYOR OF  
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION**

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**10 priorities to protect people and planet  
and help the COVID-19 recovery**

**We're facing a climate and ecological emergency – the biggest threat we've ever seen to humanity's existence. What's more, we need to recover from the damage COVID-19 has done to businesses, jobs and livelihoods. This is the challenge that awaits the next Mayor of Liverpool City Region**

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

Tackling the climate, nature and COVID-19 crises must be done in a way which benefits everyone, no matter their income, race, age or background. It's essential 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 and are the least able to rebound from its impacts.

People on lower incomes, and particularly black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, suffer most from the lack of nature and green space in our towns and cities. This is also true of air pollution, despite a smaller proportion of lower-income and BAME people owning cars than others.

Young people's futures are most at risk from climate breakdown and the decline of nature, and they're also disproportionately impacted by the economic impact of COVID-19.

The next mayor must also shift how the success of a COVID-19 recovery plan is measured. Rather than focusing on economic growth, metrics should identify whether the plan reduces poverty, decreases inequalities, increases wellbeing, and meets carbon reduction and nature restoration goals.

This Climate Action Plan will help the next mayor address the climate and ecological emergencies at the same time as responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **10 priorities the next Mayor of Liverpool City Region should commit to:**

- 1** Ensuring all infrastructure plans, programmes, and investment decisions – including plans to “build back better” from COVID-19 – are in line with what's needed to address the climate and ecological emergency. A clear carbon budget and carbon reduction pathway needs to be set out with an action plan to implement it.
- 2** Ensuring those most impacted by climate breakdown and nature loss are heard and centre-stage in decision-making.
- 3** Protecting workers and communities through a just transition from a fossil fuel-dependent economy to a low-carbon, nature-rich, circular economy, including delivering the 15,302 jobs that a Local Government Association analysis says could be created in the region by 2030.
- 4** Introducing policies and measures that ensure new development is net zero carbon, and existing homes are brought up to high energy standards, thereby relegating fuel poverty to the history books.
- 5** At least doubling public transport use, cycling, and walking within the next 10 years, to cut climate emissions and ensure everyone can breathe clean air.
- 6** Powering the region with clean, renewable energy and reaping the economic and job opportunities it will bring, while ensuring fossil fuels are kept in the ground.
- 7** Greening the city-region by increasing tree cover, protecting nature, and eliminating green-space deprivation.
- 8** Becoming a zero-waste city-region by 2030 without reliance on landfill or incineration, to reduce pressures on nature from resource extraction and pollution.
- 9** Calling on the local government pension scheme to divest from fossil fuels, to stop profiting from environmental harm.
- 10** Getting operation of the Port of Liverpool to zero carbon as soon as possible, demanding a non-road, sustainable solution to the movement of freight, and advocating for halting the importation of industrial-scale North American biomass.

## What this looks like:

1

**Ensuring all infrastructure plans, programmes, and investment decisions - including plans to “build back better” from COVID-19 - are in line with what’s needed to address the climate and ecological emergency. A clear carbon budget and carbon reduction pathway needs to be set out with an action plan to implement it.**

Too many councils and combined authorities across the country are simultaneously declaring climate emergencies, while promoting more high-carbon infrastructure like new roads. They also continue to invest in fossil fuels and promote high-carbon activities such as aviation. The adage, that “when you’re in a hole, stop digging”, is apt. All decisions need to be in line with what’s needed to address the climate and ecological emergency.

Liverpool’s Carbon Budget is aligned with the Paris agreement and allows no more than 46 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> to be emitted by 2100. But it’s estimated that this budget will be completely used up in just 7 years if emissions levels are not cut. The mayor must urgently identify a carbon-reduction pathway and action plan that is within this budget.

High-carbon developments throughout the region include the expansion of the Port of Liverpool and resulting road congestion, the proposed expansion of John Lennon Airport and a new cruise ship terminal. These are completely incompatible with getting on the right path to zero carbon.

### Practical action:

The mayor should work with partners across the region to develop an ambitious infrastructure development plan that complies with scientifically robust carbon budgets and supports nature recovery. This will involve working with local councils, the business sector, public services, trade unions, universities, and civil society. Infrastructure needed to tackle the climate and ecological emergency includes large-scale programmes for building segregated cycleways and trams, new renewable energy capacity, new green spaces in areas suffering from green-space deprivation, and retrofitting houses with energy efficiency and eco-heating on an area-by-area basis. These programmes would create much needed jobs and help COVID-19 recovery.

The mayor should use their influence within the region and at national level to ensure an infrastructure programme for climate and nature is fully resourced. All existing major schemes should be reviewed to ensure they are compliant.

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2

**Ensuring those most impacted by climate breakdown and nature loss are heard and centre-stage in decision-making.**

In the Liverpool City Region, 409 neighbourhoods have been identified by researchers as being particularly vulnerable to surface flooding due to their location and demographics (for example, age or income). Flooding and extreme heat will both be exacerbated by climate breakdown, and in decades to come Liverpool City Region’s coastal location makes it especially vulnerable to sea level rises.

In addition, 33 neighbourhoods have been identified as among those most deprived of green space in England. Green space is essential for physical and mental health and the lack of it in some areas has become very apparent during COVID-19 lockdowns. It must also be recognised that those who have done least to contribute to climate breakdown are often the most vulnerable to its effects.

### 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.

The mayor should support and empower citizen climate assemblies in the city region. Deliberative democracy approaches, like citizen juries, citizen assemblies, and participatory mapping and budgeting, should be used, especially for complicated or contentious choices.

Spending on climate change adaptation and nature restoration should focus on the most vulnerable communities. The combined authority should identify a climate adaptation and resilience lead.

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### **3 Protecting workers and communities through a just transition from a fossil fuel-dependent economy to a low-carbon, nature-rich, circular economy, including delivering 15,302 new jobs in the region by 2030.**

Green jobs and training will both be necessary to achieve a credible and sustainable plan for the region and to help the region's economy recover from the pandemic. The green economy is already the fastest growing part of the UK economy and action in this area will benefit the region.

The Local Government Association (LGA) says nearly 0.7 million direct jobs could be created in England's low-carbon and renewable-energy economy by 2030, rising to more than 1.18 million by 2050. Developing green industry, jobs and training programmes are essential to the future of the Liverpool City Region.

The LGA analysis suggests the region could benefit from 15,302 jobs over the next decade. That includes a potential 2,431 jobs in low-carbon electricity, 4,649 in low-carbon heat, 543 in alternative fuels, 4,254 in energy efficiency, 1,057 in low-carbon services, and 2,368 in low-emissions vehicles and related infrastructure.

#### **Practical action:**

The mayor should invest in green jobs, apprenticeships, and sustainable enterprise, leaving no communities behind. The job losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic mean that plans, investments and decisions to build the green economy, in sectors such as renewable energy, housing retrofit, sustainable transport, nature restoration and the circular economy, must be fast-tracked and prioritised. The mayor should commit to carrying out an assessment of where these opportunities lie in the city region and continue to pursue the adoption of an innovative doughnut economy model to secure a sustainable future for the city region. The mayor must push for the UK government to give councils the resources and powers to accelerate skills development. The mayor must also work with businesses, unions and others to develop locally relevant transition plans and for local investment to develop new employment within these sectors.

The mayor should empower workers and residents with the knowledge and motivation to act through programmes such as Carbon Literacy.

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### **4 Introducing policies and measures that ensure new development is net zero carbon and existing homes are brought up to high energy standards, thereby relegating fuel poverty to the history books.**

Any new homes and developments need to be built as net zero carbon. But most of the buildings that will be in use over the next 50 years have already been built. Only 37% of homes are currently well insulated in the Liverpool City Region. This represents a shocking waste of energy, high greenhouse gas emissions and unnecessarily high energy bills.

13% 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. With more people at home because of unemployment resulting from COVID-19 or increased home working, this problem will get worse without urgent action.

#### **Practical action:**

All homes must be brought up to high energy-efficiency standards by rolling out an area-by-area retrofit and heat pump-installation programme, ending the misery of cold, expensive-to-heat homes.

47,535 homes need to be insulated every year within the Liverpool 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 27,414 heat-pumps need to be fitted every year in the Liverpool City Region.

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

The mayor must also resist the call from the gas industry to move onto hydrogen made from natural gas and recognise the risks of entrusting future energy to poachers turned gamekeepers. Unlike making hydrogen from renewable energy, 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. We need to cut carbon emissions rapidly within the next ten years. Energy efficiency, heat pumps and heat batteries are much more sustainable solutions and ready right now.

## 5 At least doubling public transport use, cycling, and walking within the next 10 years, to cut climate emissions and ensure everyone can breathe clean air.

The Liverpool City Region must achieve a dramatic change to transport infrastructure and travel habits so that using public transport (when it's safe to do so) 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. Everybody should be able to live decently and get about without needing a car. Across the UK, almost 50% of the lowest income families (people in the bottom 20% income bracket) don't have access to a car. The proportion of women that don't have access to one is twice that of men. Access to alternatives to car ownership is a social justice and social cohesion issue, as well as an environmental issue.

Air pollution is a real problem and limits for the toxic gas nitrogen dioxide are being breached across the area. Fine particulate matter air pollution is the most damaging to health, and even World Health Organisation standards aren't considered "safe".

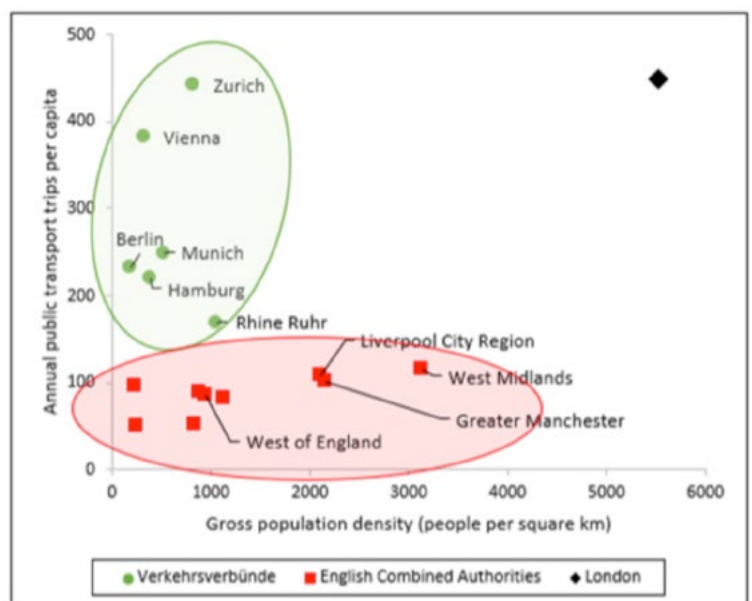
The mayor must protect the health of local people and commit to taking action to ensure air quality standards are met across the whole region and there is ongoing real-time monitoring.

### Practical action:

On 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: Verkehrsverbünde are integrated regional public transport services).

To double public transport use, cycling and walking, the barriers to a good transport system need to be removed. For example, free bus travel for under 30s, extending to all ages over time, and particularly poorer households. 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.

The Liverpool City Region can also do much better at providing safe cycling routes. Research shows that 29% of commuter



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



journeys in the region could be by bike if there was good cycling infrastructure, such as segregated cycleways and the uptake of e-bikes. A comprehensive network of safe segregated cycle routes like those planned in Copenhagen, Denmark should be the goal, continuing to build on recent Emergency Active Travel infrastructure projects.

Pop-up cycle lanes and other active travel measures introduced as part of the emergency response to COVID-19 should be kept in place wherever possible, and new routes should be connected across the region. It's really important to build community support for these changes and consult in advance about new routes and measures.

Currently only around 30% of commuter journeys in the Liverpool City Region are by walking, cycling and public transport. As a bare minimum, the mayor should work to increase this to around 60% by 2030. Money to achieve this transformation can be raised through schemes like the Workplace Parking Levy successfully pioneered by Nottingham City Council.

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## **6 Powering the region with clean, renewable energy and reaping the economic and job opportunities it will bring, 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 provide the extra electricity needed to heat homes and power transport. Some of this renewable energy can be provided in the Liverpool City Region.

The city region's plans to increase offshore wind capacity and invest in other renewable energy initiatives are to be welcomed. But plans to rely on hydrogen gas for space heating risk continuing reliance on dirty fossil fuels at a time when emissions should be slashed.

### **Practical action:**

Sustainable energy infrastructure and renewable energy production must be delivered across the region in partnership with local authorities, communities, and energy utilities. In particular, community ownership of renewable energy should be encouraged and supported.

Currently 142,083 GWh of renewable energy is generated in the Liverpool City Region. This is equal to only 1% of household energy use. If every council area within the region matched the best similar areas, then 1,476,393 GWh could be produced.

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

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## **7 Greening the city region by increasing tree cover, protecting nature, and eliminating green-space deprivation.**

Access to good 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 data on green space, gardens, and open-access land to rate access to green space for neighbourhoods in the region ([a map is available here](#)). Results unsurprisingly show that low-income and BAME communities are worst off when it comes to access to green space.

### **Practical action:**

In the Liverpool City Region there are 33 neighbourhoods rated E (the most green-space deprived). The region should aim to eliminate green-space deprivation by ensuring everybody has access to enough good quality green space. In some areas this might mean opening up school grounds outside of school hours or converting some streets or carparks into public green space. It also means increasing tree cover with more street trees and growing more trees and woods on council-owned land. Friends of the Earth has [produced a map](#) identifying where new woodlands could be planted outside urban areas. Alongside this, the mayor should recognise that importing forest-derived biomass on an industrial scale through the Port of Liverpool for use in UK power stations undermines the environmental benefits of planting trees here in the UK, and advocate against it.

**8**

## **Becoming a zero-waste city region by 2030 without reliance on landfill or incineration, to reduce pressures on nature from resource extraction and pollution.**

Only 31% of household waste in the Liverpool City Region is reused, recycled, or composted. The best local authorities in Wales are achieving more than 70%.

Incineration, or so-called energy from waste, is not a sustainable alternative. It's even more carbon polluting than gas-fired power stations and it contributes to local air pollution.

### **Practical action:**

The Liverpool 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 region and make it easier for people and businesses to stop sending waste to landfill or incineration.

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**9**

## **Calling on the local government pension scheme to divest from fossil fuels, to stop profiting from environmental harm.**

Local government pension schemes are contributing to the climate crisis by investing in climate-wrecking gas, oil, and coal companies. This investment is leading to the loss of lives and livelihoods, and the displacement of people from their homes due to extreme weather.

### **Practical action:**

The mayor should publicly call for the local government pension scheme to divest from fossil fuels and engage directly with the local authorities that control these funds, encouraging them to make immediate commitments to divest from all fossil fuels.

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**10**

## **Get the operation of the Port of Liverpool to zero carbon as soon as possible, demanding a non-road, sustainable solution to the movement of freight, and advocating for halting the importation of industrial-scale North American biomass.**

The shipping industry is a huge contributor of climate-wrecking emissions. Emissions from ships docking at the Port of Liverpool are not fully reflected in the city region's carbon budget. Air quality in the neighbourhoods surrounding the port is being undermined by emissions from ships. Furthermore, the embedded carbon emissions in consumer goods imported to the UK via ports like the Port of Liverpool are often out of sight and out of mind.

The proposed A5036 Port of Liverpool Access scheme is a government-led road scheme with the objective of improving links between the Port of Liverpool and the nearby motorway network. The proposal follows a huge increase in heavy goods vehicle (HGV) traffic since the expansion of the Port of Liverpool in 2016 and its plans for even further growth. Sustainable alternatives, such as shifting freight to rail, should have been considered before expansion was allowed to go ahead. Building an access road would hardwire outdated infrastructure into the local transport network and encourage an increase in HGV traffic in an area that's already failing to meet national air quality targets. It also goes against the declarations of a climate emergency made by the national government, the Liverpool City Region and Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.

### **Practical action:**

The mayor should make public statements opposing the government's A5036 Port of Liverpool Access road-building plans and lobby the Transport Secretary to cancel the road scheme.

The mayor should call on the Transport Secretary to appoint independent experts in sustainable infrastructure to research and cost alternatives, to be presented to the public in a true and meaningful consultation.

The mayor should also call on Peel Ports, which operates the Port of Liverpool, to prioritise sustainability in its operations, including addressing emissions both from visiting ships in port and the haulage companies used.

The city region should commit to achieving a shift of freight movement from road and air to rail and waterborne transport. It should also commit to at least doubling public transport use, cycling, and walking within the next 10 years, reducing traffic on local roads and cutting climate emissions.

The importing of forest-derived biomass on an industrial scale through the Port of Liverpool for use in UK power stations, including Drax, should be halted. Further, Liverpool Port must not import any products linked to deforestation and habitat destruction. The next mayor must support calls to strengthen a draft UK Due Diligence Law to not only make it illegal for companies to import foodstuffs linked with any illegal environmental destruction in the source country, but also to cover environmentally harmful imports from poorly regulated biodiversity-rich areas.

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## **Notes and further information**

Details of the methodology, data sources and targets used [are available](#).

A summary report on green space deprivation, together with links to a map and full report, [is available](#).

The graph in the transport section is taken from [A radical transport response to the climate emergency](#) by Transport for Quality of Life, Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace.

The estimate of renewable energy capacity in the area outlined in point 6 excludes offshore wind. It also excludes biomass energy, because some biomass sources can have a large carbon footprint and harm biodiversity. And it excludes incineration, because of its very high carbon emissions.