

GREENER LONDON

what the next
mayor can do to
improve our capital



National
Trust



Greener London: what the next mayor can do to improve our capital

A report by Campaign for Better Transport, CPRE, Friends of the Earth, Green Alliance, Greenpeace, London Wildlife Trust, National Trust, RSPB and WWF

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Introduction

London is a thrilling city. You can kayak from parliament to a nature reserve, explore woodlands in full view of a global financial centre, hire a bike from so many street corners, charge up your electric car at 915 locations and work for some of the most innovative cleantech companies in the world.

However, London faces major challenges: catastrophic air pollution levels are causing the premature death of thousands of Londoners every year; 432 cyclists were seriously injured or killed in 2014 alone; green spaces are being lost to development; and the city is producing nearly a quarter of a million tonnes of waste electrical equipment a year and half a million tonnes of avoidable food waste.

The next mayor has the power to tackle these challenges and can transform the city. They can improve how people live and travel in the capital and provide high quality homes in healthier, greener neighbourhoods. London could be a

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In May 2016, London votes for its next mayor. Whoever wins has a unique opportunity to make their mark on this great city.

world leading zero waste, low carbon city. With a population of 8.6 million, expected to grow to almost ten million by 2030, London needs solutions that are sustainable.

In May 2016, London votes for its next mayor. Whoever wins has a unique opportunity to make their mark on this great city and take big steps on the journey to making our capital a greener, fairer and better place to live and work.

As nine leading UK environmental organisations, active in the capital, we outline here the big ideas and the practical means to help the next mayor create a greener London by the end of their first term in 2020.

A greener London
is a healthy air city



The Great Smog of 1952 caused thousands of deaths across London but resulted in concerted action by politicians to close polluting power stations and ban coal burning at home. Today, insidious, invisible air pollution is once again killing thousands of Londoners but there is no serious attempt to tackle it. It is estimated that nearly 9,500 Londoners died prematurely due to air pollution in 2010, with diesel vehicles as one of the main causes.¹ In Putney High Street, annual nitrogen dioxide pollution limits were breached only eight days into 2016. London's children do not have ten years to wait for a solution to this problem. The next mayor must ensure that the capital's air is safe to breathe.

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London's children do not have ten years to wait for a solution.

Ideas

Clean up transport

London could be a global healthy air pioneer by cleaning up the vehicles that use its roads every day, if the mayor targets diesel engines and accelerates the introduction of hybrid and electric vehicles.

How?

Clean up London's buses

The next mayor should phase out London's remaining polluting bus fleet as soon as possible. Every bus in central London should be zero emission capable by 2018 (ie electric, hydrogen or hybrids which can operate in zero emission mode), spreading to all London buses by 2025. This would follow the Paris example of 100 per cent clean fuel buses by 2025.² To be able to achieve this, and accommodate differences in the progress of bus technology, by 2018 all new single decker buses should be electric and all new double decker buses should be zero emission capable. First steps have been taken with the Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Plan, but more ambition is needed. Funds from existing road tolls and an expanded Ultra Low Emission Zone could contribute to the cost of cleaning up London's buses.



Clean
air

Tony, Islington

Expand the Ultra Low Emission Zone

Current plans for the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) should be strengthened and expanded to cover areas within the North and South Circular Roads. As part of an overall strategy, major new road building schemes which increase pollution should be rejected. Diesel vehicles should be banned at peak times from central London when congestion is high; this already happens in Paris and is something the mayor can do with their existing regulatory powers. Revenues from an expanded ULEZ could be put towards cleaning up London's bus fleet and providing better cycling and walking infrastructure.



As part of an overall strategy, major new road building schemes which increase pollution, should be rejected.

Start to phase out diesel taxis and PHVs by 2017

There are 22,500 black cabs, mostly diesel, and 62,800 private hire vehicles (PHV) in London.³ The current plan is that all black cabs licensed from 2018 should be zero emission capable. But this means thousands of existing black cabs will stay on the road damaging our health. PHVs are set to be zero emission capable from 2023 onwards. The next mayor could profoundly improve London's air pollution by accelerating these timetables, ending the licensing of the oldest diesel taxis and PHVs in 2017 and all diesel taxis and PHVs by 2020. Diverted funds from new roads could support the shift to a clean taxi fleet.

Clean lungs fund

Over a third of all London's schools are in areas with illegal pollution levels. It is estimated that around 328,000 children attend schools in areas where the nitrogen dioxide concentration is breaching legal limits.⁴ Air pollution is linked to smaller lung capacity and compromised breathing in children. Pollution hot spots around schools need to be tackled urgently, to avoid negative health impacts for our children, and a poor long term public health legacy for the capital.

How?


A clean lungs fund to tackle pollution around schools

This should pay for a set of three measures: education; reducing immediate pollution exposure; and changes to the wider surrounding area. The fund could build on existing educational programmes such as Cleaner Air 4 Schools but should go much further by, for example, building green barriers, wider pathways, preventing idling on streets next to schools and other measures. Committing £500,000 would support around a dozen projects over the mayoral term.

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Pollution hot spots around schools need to be tackled urgently.

MORE
TREES



A greener London is a wild city



London's natural green spaces and parks make the city special. There are a wide range of benefits from contact with nature for health and mental well-being. It is known that playing, learning and relaxing alongside nature promotes children's healthy development and nurtures positive environmental attitudes and values.⁵ However, a third of families in London visit natural spaces less than six times a year and London's children are spending less and less time outdoors in green spaces. This decline is steeper for children in poorer families and some black and minority ethnic groups.⁶ The next mayor should reverse this trend to ensure that all Londoners are able to enjoy the city's beautiful green assets.

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There are a wide range of benefits from contact with nature for health and mental well-being.

London's green assets provide more than beauty. A high quality and well maintained network of natural green spaces throughout the city – its green infrastructure – makes it more climate change resilient, improving the quality of the air and water, and providing a home for wildlife. But London's wild green spaces are being lost to development. Between 2009 and 2012 alone 215.5 hectares of green, open land were lost, a space equivalent to Hyde Park and Battersea Park combined.⁷ Councils are experiencing deep budget cuts and spending on open spaces has been reduced. This puts London's public parks under huge financial pressure and serious decline is expected over the next mayor's term. There are also many green spaces that fall outside of improvement plans which are not achieving their environmental and social potential, particularly around housing estates.

Ideas

Grow a wilder city

London's natural spaces need to be better protected and there are many innovative ways to create higher quality and new natural spaces, enhancing biodiversity to make a wilder, greener city. But, to achieve this, a more concerted and holistic vision for nature's recovery and ambitious leadership on green infrastructure is needed.

How?

A Green Infrastructure Commissioner

Appointed by the next mayor, this role would develop and promote an integrated green infrastructure plan for London, as recommended by the Green Infrastructure Task Force.⁸ The commissioner would be responsible for developing a clear vision and a strategic, spatial plan to help the capital become more resilient, help wildlife to flourish and contribute to people's well-being. This role could also include promoting children's access to nature via schools.⁹ The green infrastructure plan could include natural capital accounting of London's natural assets and form a central component of a Mayoral Environment Strategy and a revised London Plan.

Better funding for London's parks and green spaces

To address the park funding crisis, new finance models are needed. A future parks innovation unit could pioneer new funding solutions for the management and enhancement of parks and green spaces and set up an innovation fund with capital input from the City, HM Treasury and philanthropists.

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A future parks innovation unit could pioneer new funding solutions for the management and enhancement of parks and green spaces.



~~CAR~~
PARKS

James, Camden



SAVE OUR
NATURE
RESERVES

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The next mayor should improve existing spaces and create new exciting natural places where the deficiencies are greatest.

A 'green rooftop' requirement on all new commercial developments

London should require all new commercial buildings to have green roofs or solar roofs. Green roofs can help to create new wildlife habitats, improve energy efficiency, control pollution and slow water run-off.¹⁰ This should be part of a bigger, London wide Green Space Factor requirement for new developments, to create exciting new environments, including green walls and other measures. This will get people closer to nature, help wildlife and improve the city's resilience to climate change.

Protect London's wildlife sites

There are over 1,500 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), which are vital as wildlife habitats and provide high quality natural spaces for Londoners to explore and relax in. Stronger and more specific protection of these sites should be enshrined in the review of the London Plan to give them more weight in planning decisions. The mayor should also take on strategic oversight and the planning referral power for the 140 Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation.¹¹

Wild green spaces for all

Access to local, good quality green space is far from equal across the city. People living in disadvantaged areas have the least access and the landscapes of housing estates are often very poor. Better quality green space is more likely to be used and have a positive impact on health and well-being.¹² The next mayor should improve existing spaces and create new exciting natural places where the deficiencies are greatest.

How?

Better green spaces for at least 100 social housing estates by 2020

The next mayor should fund an ambitious programme to increase access to 5,000 more hectares of high quality green spaces by 2020. This should include commitment to enhance the landscapes of at least 100 social housing estates across London, building on the 'natural estates' work.¹³ This could be partly funded by the introduction of a green space tariff for new developments over a minimum size.



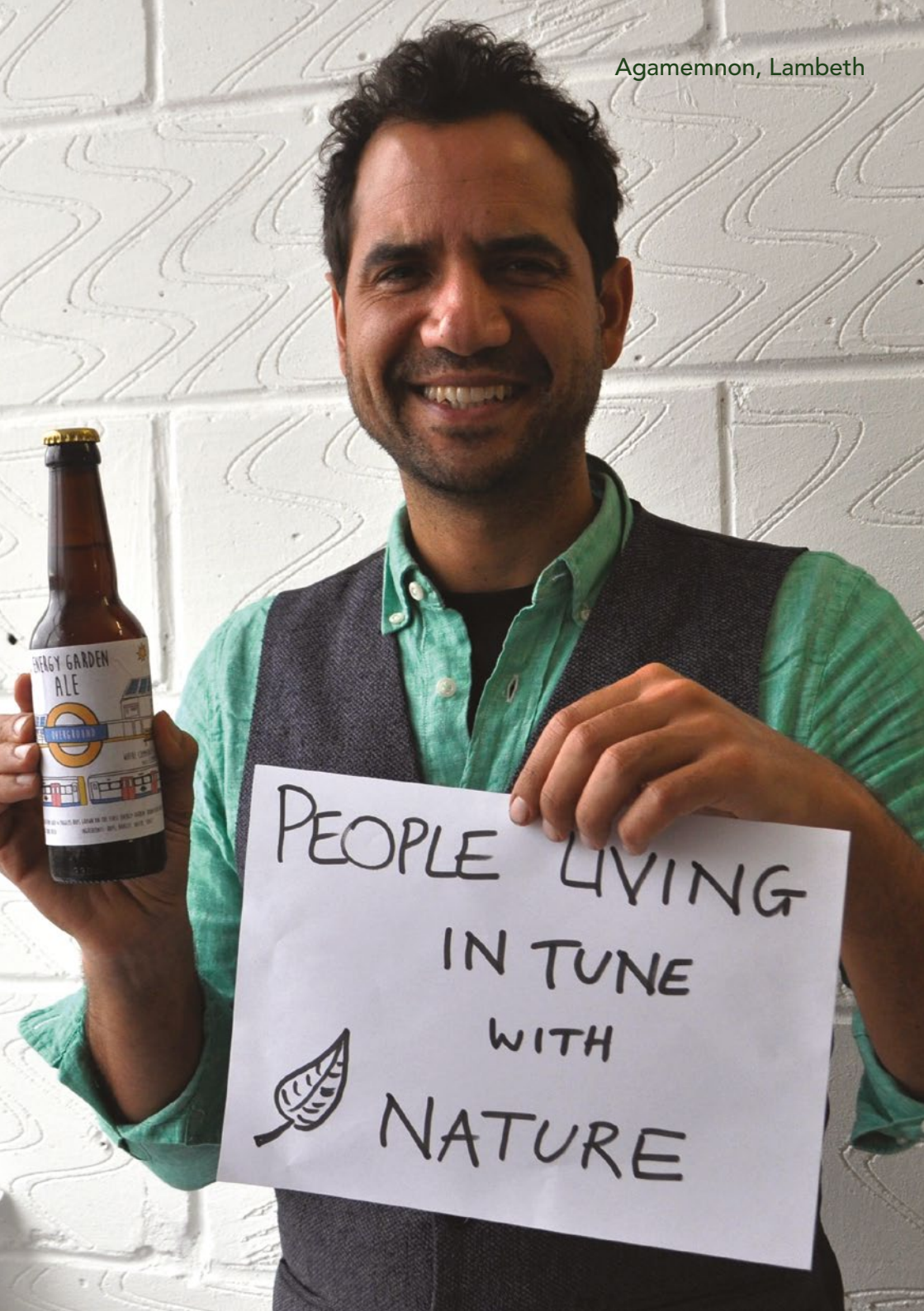
The next mayor should increase access to 5,000 more hectares of high quality green spaces by 2020.

New wild London trails

New wild trails cutting through London should be created over the next four years. These would create more accessible environments, increase biodiversity along the routes and lead to regeneration. These trails would link together existing green spaces with the green belt, and create new green areas. This could be a component of the next mayor's London Plan for protecting and enhancing green infrastructure and biodiversity.

New wild wetlands

Encouraging and match funding the restoration of at least 50 kilometres of London's rivers, and creating 100 new wetlands by 2020, would improve water quality and make the city more flood resilient and biodiverse. Access to these environments would also be improved. New developments over a certain size should include sustainable drainage requirements through an ambitious sustainable drainage action plan.



PEOPLE LIVING
IN TUNE
WITH
NATURE



A greener London is
a low carbon city



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Too many Londoners live in draughty homes they can't afford to heat.

Traditionally, capitals have been powered by the countryside around them. From hay for horse feed, to coal and wood for heat, London was relying on its hinterland long before needing power stations and a national grid. But in the twenty first century how we generate and use power is changing. London can show how a global capital can power itself from clean sources. By 2025, 25 per cent of London's energy is supposed to come from local sources. There is also a target to reduce London's CO₂ emissions by 60 per cent in 2025, with an interim target of 40 per cent by 2020.¹⁴ The city is not on track to meet any of these targets.¹⁵ Whilst new ways to power the capital need to be found, too many Londoners live in draughty homes they can't afford to heat.

Ideas

A warm deal for renters

Domestic properties generate 36 per cent of London's total carbon emissions. Energy efficiency is critical to bringing emissions and energy bills down. It is estimated, that ten per cent of London's households live in fuel poverty.¹⁶ A greater proportion of energy inefficient properties are in the private rented sector. Comprehensive energy saving retrofit programmes are needed but, so far, London has made disappointing progress.

How?

New regulatory powers to raise energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector

Currently, the mayor does not have the power to set London specific energy efficiency standards for existing buildings. The next mayor should call on government to give London the power to set energy efficiency standards for the private rented sector and then use those powers to tackle fuel poverty, eg by requiring a minimum EPC C level by 2025 for all suitable homes.

Small bills for small businesses

Over 40 per cent of London's carbon emissions come from London's workplaces. SMEs in particular find it hard to make energy savings and have received little help to improve.

How?

An interest free energy efficiency loan scheme for businesses

A new SME loan scheme for energy efficiency could spur the uptake of energy efficiency measures in smaller businesses. This would offer small and medium-sized businesses unsecured, interest free loans of £1,000 to £100,000 with a payback time of four years to help them reduce their carbon emissions through energy efficiency. This could take the form of a ten year programme backed by energy companies or the mayor. Working in conjunction with the Better Building Partnership would ensure access to commercial tenants.

A pioneering solar city

The solar industry brings jobs, investment and clean energy to millions of people across the world, but London is behind the curve. The city has the smallest amount of installed solar of any English region, although there is great potential for growth. Londoners also like the technology. Ramping up the amount of solar capacity installed will help to transform London into a clean, healthy, zero carbon city and will be popular with those who live and work in the capital.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue floral patterned sweater, is smiling and holding a white sign with black text. The sign reads "MAKE LONDON A SOLAR CITY!". She is standing in front of a window with a dark frame. The background outside the window shows a wooden shed, a wooden fence, and trees.

MAKE LONDON
A SOLAR
CITY!

Polly, Croydon

How?

Tenfold increase in solar power

The next mayor should lay the groundwork for a solar revolution in London and launch a minimum strategy for a tenfold increase in solar capacity by 2025, rolling out solar across an area equivalent to around 200,000 London rooftops. The mayor can help to drive solar over the coming years to become subsidy free. Using crowd funding schemes that enable Londoners to buy a share in London's solar future, establishing a new municipal energy supplier, supporting community projects, creating a unique London funding mechanism and identifying suitable sites for solar across the Greater London Authority's (GLA) estate are all ways for the mayor to embrace solar power. This ambition would also be helped by a green roof requirement on all new developments (see page 15).

Stop wasting heat

The heat currently wasted in London could meet 70 per cent of the city's heating needs. District heating will be crucial to meet the target to deliver 25 per cent of London's energy supply from decentralised energy in 2025. In Denmark, most major cities have heat networks and district heating accounts for around 60 per cent of all space and water heating across the country, compared to just one to two per cent in the UK. Developers of new buildings are required to look at connecting to a local heat network before designing individual heating systems. However, the difficulty of connecting networks to low carbon sources and expanding heat networks into existing buildings is a huge barrier.

How?

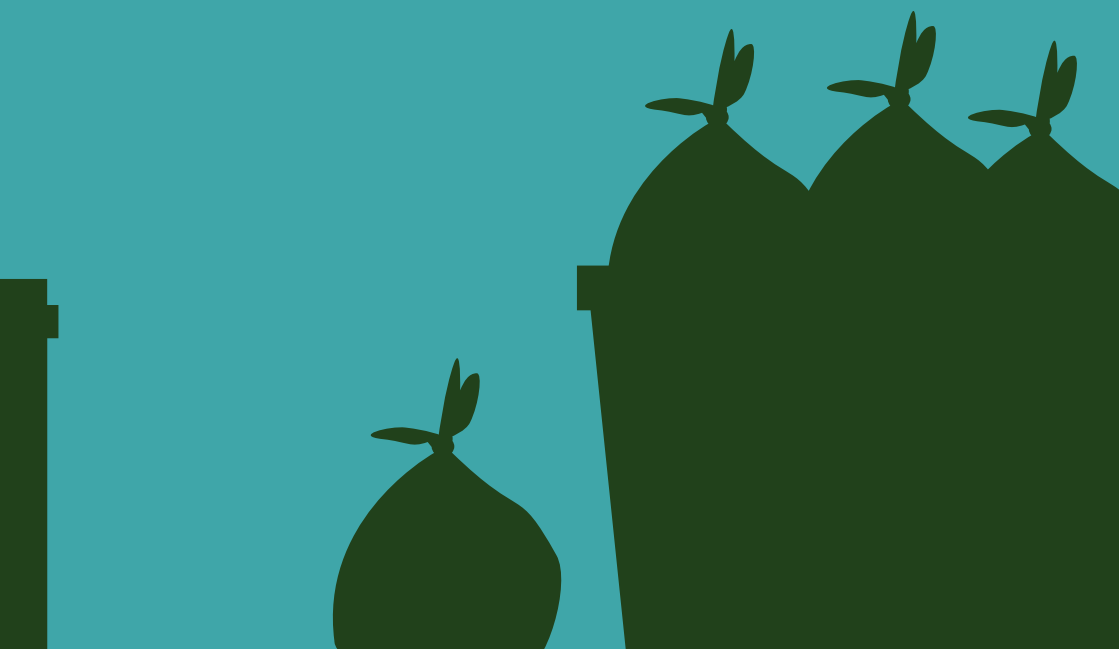
Get better connected

The mayor should encourage the London boroughs and Transport for London to assess the potential for renewable heat schemes across their estates, and then work with developers, utilities and other sources of waste heat to make them happen. New developments should be required to connect with renewable heat sources. This should all be part of an overarching heat action plan, through which the next mayor should set out to decarbonise and use much more of London's waste heat. One of the best examples of this in action is the Bunhill Heat and Power network in London, which connects to waste heat from the underground. This scheme is bringing cheaper, greener heat to over 700 existing homes and two leisure centres. The borough of Islington owns, operates and manages the network, maximising revenues for the council and passing on savings to residents.

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New developments should be required to connect with renewable heat sources.

A greener London is a zero waste city



A circular economy, which reuses, recycles and remanufactures resources, is an opportunity for new businesses, as well as having environmental benefits. To make sure London stays innovative and competitive, offering new sources of skills and jobs, the next mayor should commit to make London a zero waste city. It is estimated London could gain benefits worth £7 billion a year by 2036 from developing its circular economy.¹⁷

Leadership on zero waste

London has 20 different recycling collection systems across its boroughs and some of the lowest recycling rates in the country, which means millions of tonnes of valuable raw materials are being lost. This is not helped by the fact that every borough is choosing its own approach when it comes to recycling. London's 50 per cent recycling target is currently out of reach and manufacturer's demand for recycled materials is not being met.

How?

One recycling system for all

London's many different recycling collection regimes and food waste collections should be harmonised across the city. One straightforward system would increase the quantity and quality of recycling. It would make public communication campaigns cheaper and clearer and would mean that transient populations would not have to learn a new system every time they moved borough. The mayor has the power to convene and broker agreements across London's local authorities and work with waste companies to achieve a unified recycling system for the city.

Lead on procuring longer lasting, recyclable goods and services

The GLA group, which includes Greater London Authority, Transport for London, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the London Fire Emergency Planning Authority, spends almost £11 billion a year on goods and services. This group could be the lead procurer of circular economy goods and services in the country, providing markets for materials recycled in the city. It would stimulate new businesses in London and save the public sector money.



Dave, Haringey

A greener London
is a walking and
cycling city



London is a great city to explore by foot or bike. The city's cycling infrastructure has been improved significantly over the recent years, notably with the building of cycle superhighways as well as the bike hire scheme. Increasing numbers of Londoners are commuting by bike. But safety concerns are still the biggest barrier to more people being able to enjoy this form of transport. And, although walking is the main way people travel around London, it has yet to be considered a major infrastructure priority.¹⁸

Ideas

Walking tall

Not only does walking have positive physical and mental health benefits but it also reduces congestion on the roads and public transport.¹⁹ 'Walking tall' could be a major programme right across the city to improve and redesign London's walking infrastructure and create better routes through London's green spaces. It would make walking safer and more enjoyable, and help to direct pedestrians through green areas.

How?

More walkable 'town centres'

London Councils, which represents London's 32 boroughs and the City of London, published a residents' poll which showed that road safety and better pavements are what is needed to get Londoners walking more and feeling safe.²⁰ The next mayor could expand the pedestrian town centre improvement programmes currently being piloted in London. This would encourage a bottom-up approach, listening to local perspectives and advice about how each area can be improved for walkers.

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Road safety and better pavements are what is needed to get Londoners walking more and feeling safe.



POWERED
BIKE LANES
(DUTCH-STYLE)

Cycling safety first

In 2014, 432 cyclists were seriously injured or killed in London. Much more can be done to make cycling safer and build the infrastructure that encourages more people to cycle. Concerns about safety are the number one barrier to cycling in London.²¹ In outer London there are major carbon emission reductions to be gained by people using bikes instead of cars for local journeys and to reach public transport. But it is in these areas where cycling infrastructure is often poor.

How?

Extend 'Mini Holland' programmes and cycle hire across the city

The next mayor should expand the Mini Holland programmes to all boroughs. These programmes can transform town centres with innovative local improvements for cyclists, making routes safer and more pleasant for all. The cycle hire scheme has been a real success. The next mayor should invest in expanding the scheme to more boroughs. This should not only include an extension to areas close to central London, but also to peripheral boroughs.

Rush hour ban for unsafe lorries

Lorries have been involved in over half of cyclist deaths in London. While some lorry designs have been modified so drivers can see cyclists better, there are still plenty with lethal blind spots. They are a particular danger during rush hour. The mayor's regulatory powers should be used to ban lorries without 'direct vision' at rush hour to make the streets safer for cyclists.

Endnotes

- ¹ 9,416 early deaths were caused by the pollutants NO₂ and PM2.5 in 2010, according to King's College London: HWalton et al, 2015, *Understanding the health impacts of air pollution in London*
- ² EDF, 2015, *50 solutions for the climate: a research partnership with the RATP*
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- ⁶ London Sustainable Development Commission, 2011, *Sowing the seeds: reconnecting London's children with nature*
- ⁷ CPRE, 2013, *Response to GLA Environment Committee's Wildlife and green spaces consultation*
- ⁸ As recommended by the Green Infrastructure Task Force. Source: GLA on behalf of the Green Infrastructure Task Force, 2015, *Natural capital: investing in a green infrastructure for a future London*
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- ¹⁰ At least ten per cent of central London rooftops have green roof potential. See: Matthew Thomas, 'The GLA releases a green roof map of London', www.climatelondon.org.uk/articles/the-gla-releases-a-green-roof-map-of-london/
- ¹¹ London Wildlife Trust, 2015, *Spaces wild: championing the values of London's wildlife sites*
- ¹² CABI, 2010, *Community green: using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health*
- ¹³ See London Wildlife Trust's Natural Estate programme: www.wildlondon.org.uk/natural-estates
- ¹⁴ GLA, 2011, *Delivering London's energy future: the mayor's climate change mitigation and energy strategy*
- ¹⁵ S Evans, 2015, 'London set to miss mayor's climate change targets as population booms', *Carbon Brief*, www.carbonbrief.org/london-set-to-miss-mayors-climate-change-targets-as-population-booms
- ¹⁶ DECC, 2015, *Annual fuel poverty statistics report*
- ¹⁷ LWARB, 2015, *London: the circular economy capital*
- ¹⁸ TfL, 2013, *Travel in London: report 6*
- ¹⁹ Macmillan Cancer Support and The Ramblers' Association, 2013, *Walking works*
- ²⁰ London Councils' poll of residents, 2013, 'Walking and cycling in London – what residents think'
- ²¹ TfL, 2014, *Attitudes towards cycling*

In May 2016, London votes for its next mayor. Whoever wins has a unique opportunity to make their mark on this great city and take big steps on the journey to making the capital a greener, fairer and better place to live and work.

Greener London sets out the big ideas and practical means which would help the next mayor achieve this by the end of their first term in 2020.

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