

# Plant-Based Treaty Impact Assessment: Letter from Zack Polanski AM

Zack Polanski AM Headshot

## Key information

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Dear Sadiq,

Plant-Based Treaty Impact Assessment

20 April 2023

Our city faces many challenges. As we still emerge from the pandemic and the impacts of Brexit, we find ourselves in a full-on cost of living crisis. And looming above this all is the climate and ecological emergency.

Since I've been elected, we have had many conversations about a range of issues from cleaning up London's air, to preparedness for flooding and the protection of green spaces. I really welcome the constructive engagement we've often had in these conversations.

Food consumption and food insecurity is a huge piece of the decarbonisation puzzle. Food systems are responsible for a third of all human-driven greenhouse gas emissions globally, and a third of all global deforestation. In London, only 5% of food consumed by mass is meat, yet it is responsible for 27% of total household emissions.<sup>1</sup>

This will not be news to you. London is a signatory to the C40 Cities Good Food Declaration, and in the foreword to that document you recognised the importance of "ensuring citizens have access to balanced and nutritious food that does not harm the planet".<sup>2</sup>

As Mayor of London you have significant influence over these food based emissions, from your international platform (where I note your engagement with the work done in this area by Mayor Adams of New York) to using Mayoral programmes across health and environment to their fullest extent. I believe you can go much further with your actions.

Your free school meals funding commitment, which I strongly support, is one significant opportunity. For example, will you encourage all London Local Authorities to work with ProVeg UK? Their School Plates programme is already delivering free menu support services to over 5,000 UK schools, reducing environmental impact, improving child health and saving money.<sup>3</sup>

Another vehicle for action is endorsing the Plant-Based Treaty. This global, non-binding treaty has secured a commitment from thousands of organisations around the world to:

1. relinquish: no land use change, ecosystem degradation or deforestation for animal agriculture;
2. redirect: an active transition away from animal-based food systems to plant-based systems;
3. restore: actively restoring key ecosystems, particularly restoring forests and rewilding landscapes.<sup>4</sup>

Twenty cities globally have endorsed the treaty so far, including Norwich and Edinburgh, both calling on the UK Government to do the same, and the latter following an impact assessment delivered by Edinburgh City Council.<sup>5</sup> Following their path, I'm writing to ask you to undertake a short impact assessment of the GLA endorsing the Plant-Based Treaty and integrating its principles and actions into Mayoral programmes and policies.

This would be a sound basis for progressing this conversation based on up-to-date data and research as it pertains to London.

Yours sincerely,

Zack Polanski  
Green Party Member of the London Assembly

cc Shirley Rodrigues, Deputy Mayor, Energy and Environment

[1] [London's Foot Footprint, Re:London, published November 2021](#)

[2] [Good Food Cities Declaration, C40 Cities, published February 2022](#)

[3] [ProVeg UK, School Plates programme](#)

[4] [Plant-Based Treaty](#)

[5] [Endorsement of Plant-based treaty – Response to Motion by Councillor Burgess, The City of Edinburgh Council Policy and Sustainability Committee, published January 2023](#)