

MAYOR OF LONDON

Caroline Russell AM

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

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Date: 17 JUN 2019

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter and copy of your report 'Climate Change Risks for London'. Urgent action must be taken to reduce the impacts of climate change and I am already taking some of the most radical action of any world city to adapt our city to our changing climate.

We are making sure that Londoners know when heatwaves are forecast and know what to do to protect themselves from them, by promoting the Met Office and Public Health England's heatwave alerts and advice. We also ran London's first Flood Awareness Week last November to help Londoners understand more about how to prepare and what to do if their home is flooded. Through my funded programmes like the Greener Cities Fund, I am making sure we have more green spaces in London that are better at holding and slowing down rainwater to reduce surface water flooding.

My draft London Plan also contains robust policies to ensure new development is well adapted to climate change and resilient to severe weather. This includes more measures such as green roofs to help absorb and slow rainwater to reduce flooding, as well as helping to cool buildings by installing shading so they do not overheat.

My team are working closely with the Environment Agency to ensure London remains well defended against tidal flooding, including successfully calling on neighbouring authorities to ensure that land is safeguarded for a new Thames Barrier, which is likely to be needed in the 2070s. Transport for London is also working to make its network more resilient, including modifying stations to address flood risk. Finally, I am holding water companies to account to increase their resilience and that of London's water, plan for new water resources and reduce leakage.

My response to the recommendations in your report is as follows:

Recommendation 1: The GLA should prioritise and commission further research and analysis of future climate risk, with a focus on quantification based on the UKCP18 projections

My officers have already asked the Met Office to issue a London version of the UKCP18 data. This would help the Greater London Authority (GLA) and London organisations to incorporate this data efficiently and effectively. As highlighted in your report, there are few significant differences between the UKCP18 projection and UKCP09 projections that the London Environment Strategy is based on. However, we and the London Climate Change Partnership will keep this under review and update our analysis if necessary.

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Recommendation 2: Additional research is needed in specific areas

My officers have been gathering and publishing data, but it is also now time to move from research to action, and that is what I am doing. We work with the Committee on Climate Change, Defra and the Environment Agency to ensure we are accessing the latest data and research in this field.

My officers, through the London Climate Change Partnership (LCCP), have been working closely with the health, food, transport and emergency services sectors to develop plans for the sectors to manage the risks and impacts, and this includes actions that need to be taken.

This work involves convening sector partners and relevant experts, identifying the gaps in data, identifying thresholds which are crucial for planning to prevent disruption, and developing an understanding of how the risk is expected to change. This approach is being staged, with housing, workplaces and schools being considered in future phases. If research gaps are identified through this approach, then we and the LCCP will work with sectors to fill them.

Recommendation 3: The role of the London Climate Change Partnership (LCCP) must be enhanced and its role in commissioning and advising the GLA must be strengthened

The GLA played a key role in establishing the LCCP. When central government withdrew funding for regional partnerships, the GLA continued to support the LCCP and took on hosting the partnership in 2017 and funded the Secretariat under my administration.

I continue to support the partnership – recognising the benefits of bringing together key stakeholders who have expertise, information and responsibility on preparing London for severe weather and the impacts of climate change.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that a centralised climate data repository is created by the GLA to improve data access and ease of analysis, avoiding duplication or discrepancies

My team have already started doing this on the London datastore, first published in December 2018, available at <https://data.london.gov.uk/climate-change/>.

This will be developed further over time. Some data does still need to be held by the relevant organisations that have responsibility or take action. However, we will signpost to this data from the London datastore in order to improve access.

Recommendation 5: Rather than mapping climate impacts on their own, these should be analysed within the context of existing and new low carbon policies. For example, an expansion of heat pumps with cooling capability may help with comfort in the summer but put additional pressure on the grid during critical periods

My London Environment Strategy was the first time a strategy has brought together approaches for every aspect of London's environment. This includes bringing together analysis and policies for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Also, in the draft London Plan, I am encouraging passive cooling measures over mechanical air conditioning in new developments in order to address climate impacts and reduce emissions. We will continue to do this in the development of new low carbon policies such as decarbonisation of heat.

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As you will know, the majority of levers for tackling climate change lie with national government. That is why I am urging Ministers to listen to the growing concerns and either take action or devolve powers and resources to cities like London, so we can do what's needed to tackle this crisis.

I would welcome your support for my calls on Government.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London