

Call for evidence: Swimmable Rivers

December 2024

The London Assembly Environment Committee is investigating the Mayor of London's commitment to "Develop a bold plan for swimmable rivers within 10 years." The Committee will consider what a swimmable river is and how the Mayor can work with partners across London to deliver improvements to water quality and make rivers clean and accessible for Londoners to enjoy safely.

Background

The Mayor stated in his Manifesto for the May 2024 elections "The levels of sewage that water companies are pouring into our rivers is a scandal. I will not stand by and allow this to continue. As well as demanding clear action from Thames Water, I will launch an ambitious plan to make rivers in London swimmable within ten years."¹

In September 2024 the Mayor launched an Outdoor Swimming Guide,² which highlights the locations where Londoners can already swim outdoors safely, and where it may be possible in the future. The Mayor also committed to bringing together companies, government, charities and campaigners to clean up London rivers.

How to respond

The Committee would like to invite organisations or individuals with relevant experience or expertise to provide evidence to inform the work of the Committee and influence its recommendations to the Mayor:

A. About you/your organisation

- Organisation name
- What does your organisation do?
- Where are you based (if applicable)?

B. The Mayor's swimmable rivers commitment

1. What factors [e.g. safety, water quality] are important to assessing if a river or other waterbody is 'swimmable'? How should these be measured and monitored?
2. What improvements are achievable in 10 years? Are there any short-term priorities or interim milestones that are needed?
3. Are there specific locations in London that should be prioritised for improving water quality and increasing access to rivers or waterbodies?
4. Who is responsible for making the changes needed? What actions should the Mayor and GLA take?
5. What can the Mayor learn from other examples (national or international) of creating cleaner and accessible 'swimmable rivers'?
6. Is there other relevant information you would like to share?

¹ Sadiq Khan, [Making London Greener](#), Manifesto for May 2024 election

² Mayor of London, [Outdoor Swimming Guide](#)

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Please answer only those that are most relevant to you - you do not need to answer all questions. Written submissions should be sent to scrutiny@london.gov.uk with 'Environment Committee Swimmable Rivers call for evidence' as the subject line. The deadline is **5pm Monday 20 January**.

The London Assembly is committed to hearing from a diverse range of voices which reflect the rich diversity of the city. The Committee are also undertaking a separate survey, which is an opportunity for individuals to share their personal views on and experiences of London's rivers and waterways.

What we will do with the responses

The results will be used to inform the London Assembly Environment Committee's investigation. Responses may be used to form part of a report or output from the Committee.

In the large majority of circumstances we will publish written submissions and the name of the individual or organisation that submitted it online. This is so that there is transparency about what evidence the Committee has received. Exceptions to this are usually applied where there is a legal reason for non-publication or if there is a safeguarding or welfare issue. If there is a reason that you would like your evidence not to be published with your name (submitted anonymously) or to not be published (submitted confidentially), please let us know and the Committee will consider it. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and the Assembly may be required to release non-personally identifiable information if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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| Email submissions | scrutiny@london.gov.uk Please use 'Environment Committee Swimmable Rivers call for evidence' as the subject title |
| Further information | Richard Clarke, Senior Policy Adviser, Richard.Clarke@london.gov.uk |
| Media enquiries | Tony Smyth, External Communications Officer, Tony.Smyth@london.gov.uk |

About the London Assembly Environment Committee

The London Assembly consists of 25 elected London Assembly Members, who publicly examine the policies and programmes of the Mayor of London and relevant agencies through committee meetings, plenary sessions, site visits and investigations.

The Environment Committee examines and reports on matters relating to the environment in London and to lead on scrutiny of the Mayor's Environment Strategy. The members of the committee are:

- Zack Polanski (Chair)
- Léonie Cooper (Deputy Chair)
- Bassam Mahfouz
- Joanne McCartney
- Keith Prince
- Gareth Roberts
- Thomas Turrell