MDA No.: 1646

Title: Building Action on Net Zero by 2030

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Environment Committee meetings on 19 September 2024 and 7 November 2024, the Committee resolved that:
 - Authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with the party Group Lead Members, to agree any output from the discussion.
- Following consultation with party Group Lead Members, the Chair agreed the Committee's report on Building Action on Net Zero by 2030, as attached at **Appendix 1**.

2. Decision

2.1 That the Chair, in consultation with the party Group Lead Members, agrees the report, *Involving Londoners in the pathway to Net Zero by 2030*, as attached at Appendix 1.

Assembly Member

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:

Printed Name: Léonie Cooper AM, Chair of the Environment Committee

Spanie Coga

Date: 9 May 2025

3. Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Background and proposed next steps:

- 3.1 The terms of reference for this investigation were agreed by the former Chair, in consultation with relevant party Lead Group Members and Deputy Chairs, on 10 July 2024 under the standing authority granted to Chairs of Committees and Sub-Committees. Officers confirm that the report and its recommendations fall within these terms of reference.
- 3.2 The exercise of delegated authority approving the report on Building Action on Net Zero by 2030 report will be formally noted at the Environment Committee's next appropriate meeting.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision:

Signature (Committee Services): Sal Fazal

Printed Name: Saleha Fazal

Date: 7 May 2025

Financial Implications: NOT REQUIRED

Note: Finance comments and signature are required only where there are financial implications arising or the potential for financial implications.

Signature (Finance): Not Required

Printed Name:

Date:

Legal Implications:

The Chair of Environment Committee has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signature (Legal):

Printed Name: Rory McKenna, Monitoring Officer

Date: 9 May 2025

Email: rory.mckenna@london.gov.uk

Supporting Detail / List of Consultees:

- Zack Polanski AM;
- Keith Prince AM; and
- Gareth Roberts AM.

4. Public Access to Information

- 4.1 Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FolA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website, usually within one working day of approval.
- 4.2 If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.
- 4.3 **Note**: this form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If yes, until what date:

Part 2 - Sensitive Information:

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA or EIR should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form? NO

Lead Officer / Author

Signature: Richard

Printed Name: Richard Clarke

Job Title: Senior Policy Adviser

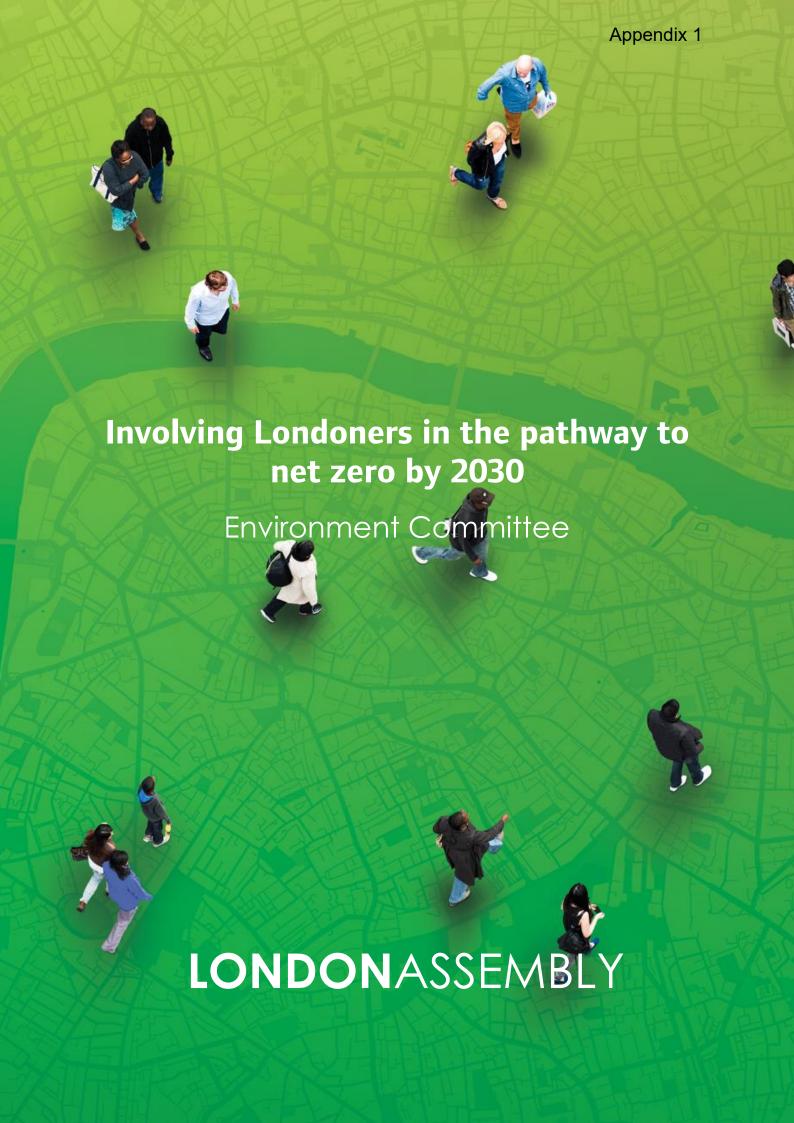
Date: 7 May 2025

Countersigned by Executive Director:

Signature:

Printed Name: Helen Ewen, Executive Director of Assembly Secretariat

Date: 7 May 2025



Environment Committee





Léonie Cooper AM (Deputy Chair)



Bassam Mahfouz AM



Joanne McCartney AM







This investigation was carried out by the Environment Committee in 2024-25, with Zack Polanski as Chair, and the Assembly Members listed above.

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Contents

Involving Londoners in the pathway to Net Zero by 2030	1
Environment Committee	2
Contact us	2
Contents	3
Foreword	4
Executive Summary	5
Recommendations	6
The priority of climate action	8
The Mayor's 2030 net zero target	10
The Mayor's 'Accelerated green' pathway to net zero	10
Is London on track to achieve the Mayor's 2030 target?	12
Building action on net zero	17
Delivering co-ordinated action on net zero across London	17
Involving Londoners in decisions	20
Borough-led innovations in engagement	20
Technology and Town Hall COPs	22
Towards a net zero engagement strategy for London	22
Participatory budgeting	26
Driving collaborative action across London	28
Net zero targets across London boroughs	28
Convening on Net Zero	30
Funding the net zero transition	31
Unlocking private finance	31
Devolution of funding from Government	32
Committee Activity	35
Appendix I: Key targets of the Accelerated Green pathway	36
Appendix II: Collated London Borough Net Zero Targets	37
Other formats and languages	39
Connect with us	40

Foreword



Zack Polanski AM Chair of the Environment Committee 2024-25

We will only see strong action on climate by engaging well with Londoners, and their wider concerns. Good climate action isn't just ditching fossil fuels, it is making that change work for Londoners – so that we all have more secure and affordable lives.

Cities like London are at centre of both the risks and the action to tackle the climate crisis. London has experienced heatwaves that have burned down people's homes, led to earlier deaths and seen flooding from heavy rain that has impacted thousands.

However, the risk remains that worse could happen in London. The recent devastating wildfires in Los Angeles and deadly flooding in Valencia are evidence of the tragic impacts that a changing climate can bring.

We are at a time now when there is a risk of the action on climate we need globally faltering, and London needs to redouble its efforts. It is not yet clear how the Mayor's current pathway to net zero by 2030 will be delivered, emissions have been steady since the pandemic rather than decreasing.

The challenge we are now confronted by is that climate action is moving closer to home. Within the coming years we need to see changes to the way homes are heated, to the way we travel and more to reach the climate targets that London has set for itself.

Londoners have not yet been well engaged in that work. There are some welcome signs – some boroughs have been working harder at finding ways to engage their communities. And this report includes a clear picture on the targets throughout London for net zero – at City and borough level.

The Mayor and London boroughs can make such a difference on the scale of climate action in this city. The Government can provide a clearer framework for cities to operate in, but we cannot wait for that to happen. Cities may not have all the powers or the money they may need to take climate action directly. Politically it is the job of leaders in London to show the way, and engage their residents, businesses and organisations in the changes we need to make.

Executive Summary

The Mayor of London declared a climate emergency in December 2018, after the London Assembly had called on him to do so. He then updated London's target for achieving net zero – the point at which new emissions of greenhouse gases from within London balance those removed from the atmosphere – from 2050 to 2030. By bringing the target forward by twenty years, he recognised the urgency of action to reduce emissions – but also set a bold and significant challenge.

Achieving this target will require changes to the way people live, how we power people's homes, how people travel around the city, and how businesses operate. The scale of financing net zero in London is also likely to run to billions of pounds. However, this challenge also provides an opportunity for everyone to benefit from the transition. Londoners are key to making the changes needed. It is essential that all of London's communities experience the cobenefits of a green transition, such as streets better for walking and cycling, or warmer homes. We are clear that where complex choices are needed on this pathway, it is essential that both the impacts and decision-making process are fair.

While the Mayor has a significant convening role, the GLA Group alone is only responsible for approximately five per cent of London's emissions. He therefore needs to use his power to encourage partners and Londoners to work together towards this target.

Given the scale of this challenge, this investigation has focussed on assessing the progress made towards the Mayor's net zero target alongside evaluating what the Mayor is doing to engage Londoners with these plans.

We have found that with less than five years until 2030, London is not achieving the rates of change needed to meet the Mayor's 2030 net zero target.

We know that Londoners are key to making the changes needed to hit the 2030 target. This is a critical time to accelerate London's transformation to a cleaner, greener city, and Londoners need to be better engaged in a coherent plan to reduce emissions.

We have heard that many Boroughs in London are already doing this, and from the examples shared during this investigation, we can see they are using innovative ways to engage Londoners. What the Mayor now needs to do is bring these stories together and communicate at scale to make climate action tangible for Londoners, including involving them in the options and choices necessary to achieve net zero.

We believe the Mayor should develop an engagement strategy for London, including trialling new engagement approaches and give Londoners an opportunity to contribute to decisions in new ways. This should include participating in the budget process and contributing to local priorities.

We have also heard that while it is important to be honest about challenges, and the work to overcome them, it is also important to clearly communicate the range of benefits that new approaches can bring. This means talking to Londoners not at them; the stories the GLA and partners across London need to weave must connect with different people's experiences.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Mayor should publish a net zero climate dashboard, updated at least quarterly, reporting progress on a set of key indicators and milestone actions to track progress on the emissions pathway to net zero by 2030.

This should include indicators for buildings and transport, such as number of heat pumps and solar PV installed, and the distance travelled by vehicles in London. It should also include borough-level data as appropriate.

A simple RAG (Red Amber Green) rating of whether each is on track should be provided, with actions listed to accelerate progress if needed.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor should amend guidance for Mayoral decisions to include an analysis of the effect of the decision on CO2 equivalent emissions in London.

The Mayoral Decisions implementing Mission and Mandate Delivery Plans must be published and include a climate impact assessment section, detailing analysis of the forecast emissions savings across the lifetime of the policy.

Recommendation 3

By October 2025, the Mayor should develop and publish a public engagement strategy for net zero, co-ordinated by the London Partnership Board and working with the London Assembly, with funding allocated to ensure that representative voices from all parts of the capital and backgrounds are heard in discussions about London's climate challenges.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should innovate further in public engagement approaches to involve Londoners in key climate decisions. This should start with convening a Town Hall climate conference at City Hall to engage Londoners in the run-up to COP30 in November 2025, and could also explore new techniques, such as 'strategy rooms'.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor and London boroughs should pilot participatory budgeting approaches which would allocate funding according to local priorities tied to the delivery of net zero as part of the next GLA and municipal budgets for 2026/27. The GLA should amend its budget guidance for the 2026/27 budget to reflect this approach.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should set out by September 2025 how he will use the London Partnership Board and its new Energy Mission to provide careful and active monitoring, and accelerate action towards his net zero 2030 target.

Recommendation 7

The Government should back London as a 'net zero trailblazer city' that is aiming to move further and faster. The devolution reforms currently taking place offer an opportunity to support London's 2030 ambitions with a multi-year financial settlement.

The priority of climate action

Cities are both a problem for net zero and a solution. Cities consume 78 per cent of the world's energy and account for more than 60 per cent of its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The damaging flooding in London in 2021 that cost over £100 million and extreme heat in 2022 that led to nearly 400 deaths showed the capital is already on the frontline experiencing the impacts of climate change. Rozanne McMillan, an Associate Director at CDP described cities to us as "a pivotal piece of the puzzle to tackling climate change".

In 2018, the Mayor of London set an ambitious target of making London 'net zero' by 2030, a full twenty years ahead of the national target. This is a bold and welcome step for setting out how London will play its part in solving the 'climate crisis'. Yet, it also presents a significant challenge. Dr Ashok Sinha, CEO of Ashden and Chair of the London Sustainable Development Commission (LSDC), highlighted to the Committee the scale of what meeting this challenge will look like:

"we are talking about, completely re-kitting and retooling our society and our economy, the way we travel, the homes we live in, our work patterns, the way we eat, the way we enjoy our leisure time, and our relationship with the natural world. It is a whole society, systems-level change, but it brings with it huge opportunities for people to live better lives." ⁵

Net Zero

Net zero refers to the balance between new greenhouse gas emissions being added to the atmosphere, such as through the burning of fossil fuels, and those being removed.

Net zero does not mean zero emissions as it can include the equivalent removal (sometimes known as offsetting) of any emissions through natural means, such as tree planting, or artificial carbon capture and storage. ⁶

The scale of this challenge will likely involve changes to how businesses go about their work and how people live their everyday life. We wanted to help the Mayor and Greater London

¹ United Nations, <u>Generating power</u> [Accessed: 28 March 2025]

² Emma Howard Boyd CBE, The London Climate Resilience Review, July 2024 p.6

³ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 1, p2

⁴ The Guardian <u>London mayor unveils plan to tackle 'climate emergency'</u> 11 December 2018 [Accessed 2 May 2025]

⁵ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 meeting, Panel 1, p.4-5

⁶ United Nations For a livable climate: Net-zero commitments must be backed by credible action [Accessed 2 May 2025]

Authority (GLA) engage Londoners on this journey. We also wanted to examine what progress has been made so far recognising that we are three years on from the Mayor setting the target, and yet only five years away from the 2030 deadline.

As part of this investigation, Dr James Richardson from the Climate Change Committee told us:

"what really matters, and where the UK has been very strong over the years, is having consensus on this across all the main political parties... That science, evidence-driven approach is, in the end, the only one that will succeed, and that really needs to be at the heart of decision making." 7

As a Committee, we endorse this science driven approach, and the urgency of action. But we recognise that to be successful – particularly in the context of such an ambitious timetable – this approach must also be rooted in and meaningfully engage with people's everyday lives and experiences.

We also acknowledge the reality some of the options to achieve net zero will be contentious, and that Londoners will have concerns which are genuine and legitimate. In this context, this report provides proactive, meaningful recommendations to build consensus on the options and pathways towards net zero – including when they involve changes to the way we live.

⁷ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, <u>Panel 1</u> p.2

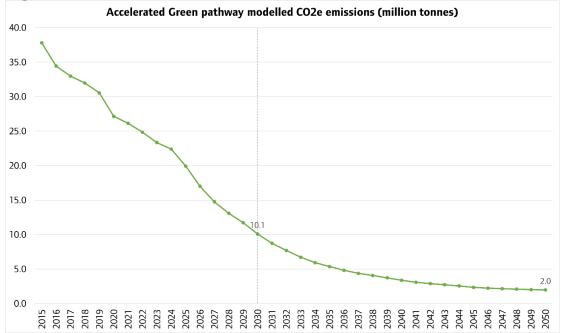
The Mayor's 2030 net zero target

The Mayor's 'Accelerated green' pathway to net zero

In December 2018, the London Assembly passed a motion calling for "... the Mayor to declare a Climate Emergency, supported by specific emergency plans with the actions needed to make London carbon neutral by 2030".8 In the same month, the Mayor declared a climate emergency for London and adopted a target of achieving net zero in London by 2030.9

The Mayor commissioned consultants Element Energy to assess potential options to achieve this target, and in January 2022 selected the 'Accelerated Green' pathway as his preferred approach.¹⁰ This aims to achieve a 78 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared with 1990 levels by 2030, and off-set the residual emissions.¹¹ The Mayor has described his approach as balancing "urgency, ambition, social justice and deliverability."¹² Even if the Mayor's target is achieved in 2030, there would be around 10 million tonnes of residual emissions that would need to be off-set, although this level is forecast to reduce in subsequent years (**Figure 1**).





Source: Research Unit analysis of Element Energy, <u>London's Zero Carbon Pathways Tool</u>, published March 2022. Results based on the Electricity Grid emissions factor 'BEIS Green Book Emission Factor 2020', and the carbon price 'BEIS - Low - Green Book Oct 2021'.

⁸ GLA, Climate Emergency, 6 December 2018

⁹ The Guardian <u>London mayor unveils plan to tackle 'climate emergency'</u> 11 December 2018 [Accessed 2 May 2025]

¹⁰ GLA, Pathways to Net Zero Carbon by 2030 [Accessed 2 May 2025]

¹¹ GLA, London Net Zero 2030: An Updated Pathway p.20

¹² GLA London Net Zero 2030: An Updated Pathway p.7

The Mayor's net zero target is based on greenhouse gas emissions produced within London (direct sources known as 'scope 1' emissions), as well as those relating to energy used within the city, but generated elsewhere, such as power from the national grid (indirect 'scope 2' emissions). The GLA publishes estimates of these emissions annually in the London Energy and Greenhouse Gas Inventory (LEGGI) – although the data has a two-year time lag as the GLA must wait for other datasets to be published before it can be put together.¹³

The major sources of greenhouse gas emissions produced in London are caused by generating energy for transport and heating buildings. This includes the gas burnt in boilers, the petrol, diesel, and electricity fuelling the vehicles on London's roads, and the electricity that powers lighting, heating and appliances. ¹⁴ There are also emissions relating to industrial processes, waste disposal, and aviation. ¹⁵

Emissions from air travel are included in the Mayor's target but, as Pete Daw, Head of Climate Change at the GLA, clarified to us, due to "global protocols for how cities should report their emissions" only those relating to flights that "take off in London from airports within the city to a high of 1,000 metres," are included. This means that the aviation emissions reported in London are currently relatively small compared with emissions from road travel. Even with this restricted assessment, aviation emissions have a large impact on residual emissions from transport as road vehicles are decarbonised. Element Energy advised in 2022 that "limiting growth of aviation as far as possible is a crucial action for achieving the Mayor's climate ambitions". 17

The Mayor's net zero target does not include indirect emissions from products and services consumed within London but produced elsewhere. This could include emissions from manufacturing of consumer goods and building materials, transport emissions used to transport goods from outside the capital or from London residents' emissions from travel outside London. (indirect 'scope 3' emissions). These are also not recorded in LEGGI. The GLA, together with London Councils and ReLondon (the body responsible for advising London on waste policy), has separately commissioned estimates of these 'consumption-based' greenhouse gas emissions. This shows that London's consumption-based emissions alone in 2021 were around 80 Mt CO₂e – considerably higher than the 28Mt CO₂e for 2021 of scope 1 and 2 emissions that is included in the LEGGI. The CLA are transported to transport emissions alone in 2021 were around the consumption of the consumptio

¹³ GLA, <u>LEGGI 2022</u>; GLA <u>LEGGI Data Explorer</u> About LEGGI

¹⁴ GLA <u>LEGGI Data Explorer</u> About LEGGI

¹⁵ Element Energy (2022) Analysis of a Net Zero 2030 Target for Greater London p.3

¹⁶ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 2 p.11

¹⁷ Element Energy (2022) Analysis of a Net Zero 2030 Target for Greater London p.54

¹⁸ Element Energy (2022) <u>Analysis of a Net Zero 2030 Target for Greater London</u> p.3. However, scope 3 emissions associated with the disposal or treatment of waste generated within London, but disposed of outside the city are included in LEGGI. <u>About LEGGI</u> LEGGI 2022

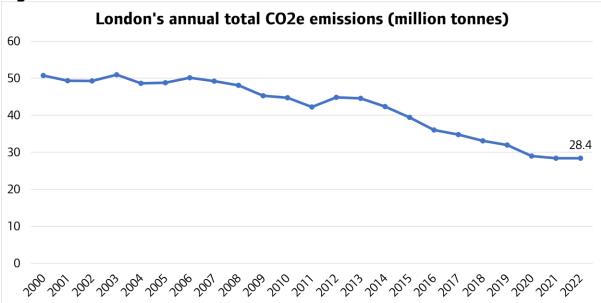
¹⁹ London Councils, <u>Consumption-Based Emissions (CBEs) dataset for London July 2024</u> [Accessed 2 May 2025]; London Datastore <u>London's consumption based greenhouse gas emissions</u>. Mt stands for Mega tonnes or million tonnes of CO2 equivalent.

Is London on track to achieve the Mayor's 2030 target?

The GLA's evidence to the Committee highlighted that there has been significant progress in reducing emissions. In 2021 "London's CO2e emissions were ... a 37 per cent reduction on 1990 levels and a 44 per cent reduction since the peak of emissions in 2000."²⁰

However, the GLA has since published new emissions data for 2022. The latest LEGGI data on emissions in London shows a small increase in emissions between 2021 and 2022. The GLA describe this as "a very small 'pandemic rebound effect'" as emissions increased from 28.37 in 2021 to 28.4 million tonnes in 2022 (**Figure 2**).²¹

Figure 2



Source: Scrutiny Research Unit analysis of <u>LEGGI 2022</u> data, published November 2024. Pre 2005, data only shows CO2 emissions. From 2005 onwards, emissions data includes emissions of other greenhouse gases expressed as a CO2 equivalent (CO2e)

Many of the emissions reductions achieved so far have been driven by decarbonisation of the electricity grid. Dr Sinha told the Committee:

"[London has] made a lot of progress but let us also remember that while we may have decarbonised by about 50 per cent compared to 1990, a lot of that has been driven by decarbonisation elsewhere. A lot of that has been driven by decarbonisation of the grid. We have benefitted substantially from offshore wind farms in the North Sea in propelling our decarbonisation. That is not to say we have not done a very good job in a number of areas. Active travel has expanded considerably over the past few years. We have seen increases in the availability of electric buses, for example. There has been some movement on transportation, and there have been initiatives in various areas, in solar deployment in London and in relation to retrofit."

²⁰ GLA's submission to the Committee NZ002 p.8

²¹ London Datastore <u>London Energy and Greenhouse Gas Inventory (LEGGI)</u> [Accessed 28 April 2025] Note, the LEGGI 2022 data updated the estimate for 2021 from that included in LEGGI 2021.

²² Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 meeting, Panel 1, p.1

The Mayor's updated pathway for net zero by 2030 report also makes this point, stating that "the decarbonisation of the electricity grid to date means that many of the easier, centralised actions to reduce emissions from buildings have already been taken."²³

The Accelerated Green pathway identified a number of actions needed to reduce emissions. These include energy efficiency improvements to buildings, low-carbon heating, and expansion of solar power, as well as shifts in transport choices to reduce car travel and constrain van, heavy goods vehicles and aviation travel, and increasing the proportion of electric vehicles used. These are summarised in Appendix 1.²⁴ While the GLA shared information with the Committee in their submission about actions that they are taking in these areas, the Committee note that progress in a number of these areas has been challenging.²⁵

For technical reasons, it is not possible to directly compare the numbers in the original Accelerated Green pathway and the latest LEGGI estimates of actual emissions.²⁶ The most accurate and consistent way to assess progress is to compare rates of change – to assess whether the actual emissions have fallen by the rate that should have been observed in the accelerated green pathway over the same period. This is set out in **Figure 3**. It shows that the current level of emissions has not achieved the reductions needed to achieve the Mayor's proposed trajectory of reaching net zero by 2030.²⁷

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²³ GLA, London Net Zero 2030: An Updated Pathway p.11

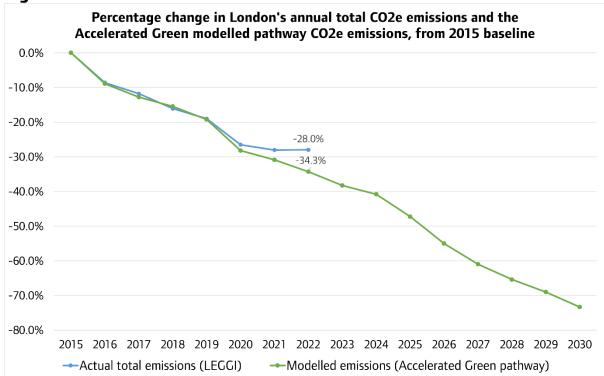
²⁴ GLA, Pathways to Net Zero Carbon by 2030 p.23-25

²⁵ For example, the GLA list the Solar Together scheme as an example of action to help households access solar PV panels (GLA Submission to the Committee NZ002. p11). However, while the scheme did result in cost savings to some households, the failure of one installer caused serious issues – which led to cancellations and a lengthy process to try and ensure affected households weren't left out of pocket. Overall, the programme achieved 3,236 installations against a total target range of 3,700-5,400. Source: AECOM GLA 82284 – Solar Together London Programme Evaluation Final Report July 2024, p.2; GLA, GLA Response to Solar Together Evaluation

²⁶ The GLA have explained that this is due to the LEGGI incorporating updates to historic energy consumption data, and differences in grid emissions factors used in the LEGGI and the Accelerated Green pathway – the LEGGI uses the Government's Company Reporting emissions factors, whereas the original pathway used Treasury Green Book estimates (as this is the only source with historic emissions factors and projections of long-term future scenarios. There are also minor differences in initial sources of emissions (for waste and industrial emissions) due to data availability at the time of modelling.

²⁷ Because of technical differences between the data assumptions in the Accelerated Green pathway and the data recorded in LEGGI the absolute values are not directly comparable, but progress – as measured by the rate of change, can be compared.





Source: Scrutiny Research Unit analysis of <u>LEGGI 2022</u> data, published November 2024

The GLA have sought to estimate what more action is needed.²⁸ In the Mayor's 2025-26 budget, the GLA set out the gap between current forecasts of progress and the Accelerated Green pathway, which show a clear divergence (**Figure 4**). The areas shaded red, blue and yellow indicate emissions reductions that the GLA hopes to influence, or which require regulatory change or additional funding to achieve in order to close the gap.²⁹

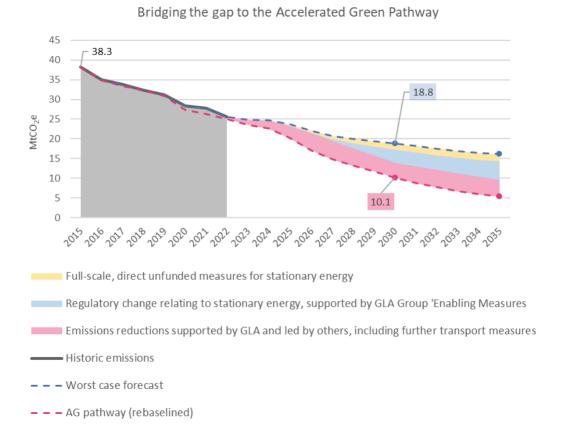
Dr Sinha told us in September 2025 that "we are a long way short of having the frameworks, the funding, the programmes, the partnerships and, I would say, the collective leadership across all of our sectors and all sectors of Government to complete the remainder of the decarbonisation."³⁰

²⁸ Note, this analysis adjusts both the Accelerated Green pathway and LEGGI data on current emissions to create a consistent dataset for future estimates. It is not designed to accurately show current progress, but rather give an indication of what more action is needed.

²⁹ GLA Final Draft Consolidated Budget 2025-26 Para 2.27

³⁰ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 meeting, Panel 1, p.1





The GLA is itself making significant progress on reducing its own emissions. The 2025-26 Budget highlights that it has cut its own emissions by approximately 47 per cent since 2015-16. And it forecasts being able to cut emissions by 84-92 per cent in 2030.³²

Yet, across London as a whole, the target for delivery of net zero by 2030 looks increasingly less likely. At the March 2025 Mayor's Question Time, the Mayor acknowledged the scale of the net zero challenge, but not the gap between his net zero pathway and the current emissions.³³ The Committee believes the Mayor needs to set out the additional steps to accelerate progress across the policy areas he has direct control of, but also those outside of his direct influence. It is also unclear what new policy choices the Mayor has made where actions suggested by his chosen pathway are not being pursued, or where change is slower than planned.

Through this investigation, we heard about how important tracking – and communicating – progress is to driving forward actions on net zero. Rozanne McMillan, Associate Director of Cities, States and Regions Partnerships at CDP told us that it is "essential" for cities to set ambitious targets and report against them as "what gets measured gets managed." ³⁴

³¹ GLA, Part 2 Final Consolidated Budget 2025-26, March 2025, p.12

³² GLA, Part 2 Final Consolidated Budget 2025-26, March 2025, p.12

³³ MQ2025/1141 [Net Zero by 2030] 2 April 2025

³⁴ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 1 p9

The GLA does not currently publish a regular detailed analysis of progress towards the Mayor's 2030 target for the whole of London. In February 2025, the GLA launched an interactive data explorer, which presents historic emissions data by borough, sector, and year.³⁵ This is a welcome addition. Yet, it does not include milestones and metrics that would allow Londoners to assess progress towards the net zero target, which we believe could help drive engagement with the urgency of action and build a sense of shared responsibility.

Recommendation 1

The Mayor should publish a net zero climate dashboard, updated at least quarterly, reporting progress on a set of key indicators and milestone actions to track progress on the emissions pathway to net zero by 2030.

This should include indicators for buildings and transport, such as number of heat pumps and solar PV installed, and the distance travelled by vehicles in London. It should also include borough-level data as appropriate.

A simple RAG (Red Amber Green) rating of whether each is on track should be provided, with actions listed to accelerate progress if needed.

³⁵ GLA, <u>London Energy and Greenhouse Gas Inventory - Data Explorer</u> [Accessed 2 May 2025]

Building action on net zero

In this investigation we focussed on what steps the Mayor could take to better involve Londoners in this collective effort, and how to catalyse support from residents, businesses and other key stakeholders, such as local authorities.

While the Mayor has set out clear targets and has access to data to track progress, we consider that more could be done to give Londoners ownership and agency in deciding actions to contribute to the changes needed. Tyrone Scott, Senior Movement Building and Activism Officer at War on Want told the Committee that London's net zero target needs to be prominently communicated and should be central to decisions:

"there is a real importance in aiming for that target, very, very clearly, loudly, vocally and using that target to allow London to be a leader in driving the action that is needed to tackle this climate crisis." ³⁶

This urgency needs to also be made relatable and meaningful to Londoners.

Delivering co-ordinated action on net zero across London

The Mayor has important powers over planning, transport and skills in London which mean that he has the ability to shape policies and approaches to reducing emissions. Yet, he only directly controls less than five per cent of London's emissions through the GLA group, and therefore needs to work with others.³⁷

In setting the net zero target, the Mayor acknowledged achieving it "will require co-ordinated action from the Mayor, boroughs, communities, businesses, financiers and the public sector." ³⁸ Dr James Richardson told us that the targets "are extraordinarily ambitious. They are premised in that analysis on actions by central Government, without which they would seem extremely unlikely to occur." ³⁹ When we questioned the Deputy Mayor in November 2024 about what he and the Mayor were asking for from Government, he told us:

"[P]art of what we have been doing over the past two to three months has been [..] basically providing Government with as much information as possible where we have shown that, when you do take action, it can work. If we do have further resources or the powers required, then we can even go further. It is that information supply that has been really important for us to be able to provide to the Government, for them, to understand how they could devise their plans as they move forward."⁴⁰

The Committee recognises that the Mayor has shown some leadership in the areas he can directly control. For example, he has set a requirement in the London Plan for all new major

³⁶ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 meeting, Panel 1, p.8

³⁷ GLA Submission to the Committee NZ002 p.9

³⁸ GLA, London Net Zero 2030: An Updated Pathway, p.7

³⁹ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 1, p.9

⁴⁰ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 2 p.6-7

18

developments to be net zero, including through on-site energy efficiency and energy supply measures and off-setting payments for any residual emissions.⁴¹ The Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy, Mete Coban MBE, told us that this is already having an impact:

"[I]n London, we are leading the way with carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions projected to be less than half the levels required by national building regulations, and that is a staggering reduction of 32,000 tonnes. We have also seen more than a quarter of these carbon savings coming from energy efficiency alone, which is basically the equivalent of loft insulation in more than 13,000 homes."⁴²

The Mayor has committed to ensuring all buses in London will be zero emission by $2030.^{43}$ In 2025, the Mayor told the Assembly "TfL's buses make up the largest zero-emission bus fleet in Western Europe."

The Mayor has also introduced a system of climate budgeting, which aims to reduce the emissions from the organisations that he directly controls (the 'GLA group', which includes TfL, the Met Police and London Fire Brigade). The Mayor's 2025-26 budget set out plans for reducing emissions from 0.85 Mt CO2e in 2023/24 to 0.27 Mt CO2e in 2030. ⁴⁵ As Catherine Barber, then Assistant Director for Environment and Energy at the GLA, told us "Through climate budgeting, we also report annually on the net zero 2030 targets for the whole of the GLA group, and what is being funded and then what is delivered as well."

Climate budgeting at the GLA

A climate budget is a governance system that mainstreams climate considerations into decision making via the budget allocation process.⁴⁷

The GLA first introduced a Climate Budget for the 2023-24 financial year. 48

The GLA Budget Guidance requires functional bodies to include a section within their budget submissions dedicated to the London Climate Budget, including funded and unfunded measures, as part of the Mayor and GLA Group's goal to achieve net zero by 2030.⁴⁹

While the GLA does not include consumption-based emissions in the net zero target, the Mayor has taken some action in this area. The GLA states that "the London Plan includes a pioneering policy that targets the whole life-cycle emissions of new development and the Mayor has

⁴¹ For a full set of measures, see the GLA's submission to the Committee NZ002 p.12-15

⁴² Environment Committee, November meeting, Panel 2 p.1

⁴³ GLA, <u>Cleaner Buses</u>, [accessed: 4 April 2025]

⁴⁴ MQ2025/1141 [Net Zero by 2030] 2 April 2025

⁴⁵ GLA, Part 2 Final Consolidated Budget 2025-26, March 2025, p.12

⁴⁶ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 2 p.4

⁴⁷ GLA, Mayor's Budget Guidance 2025-26, 31 July 2024, para 4.52 p.29

⁴⁸ GLA, Part 2 Final Consolidated Budget 2025-26, March 2025, p.12

⁴⁹ GLA, Mayor's Budget Guidance 2025-26, 31 July 2024

committed to working with the food sector to reduce consumption-based emissions and food loss and waste from the supply chain."⁵⁰

We welcome the leadership in these areas that the Mayor is showing. It is important for the credibility of the net zero target that the GLA does everything it can to cost-effectively reduce emissions in the areas it directly controls, to demonstrate to others that change is possible. Yet, we are concerned that the Mayor is not yet demonstrating how all his policies and commitments align with his net zero targets. Whilst we welcome the pioneering work the GLA has led around climate budgeting, and the clear and direct links to the Mayor's net zero commitments, we are concerned that this link is absent in other policies.

For the credibility of the Mayor's net zero target, we feel it is important that he clearly articulates how and when his policies will deliver against the net zero target. But also crucially, where there are gaps that will require further action.

Mayoral Decisions are a key governance mechanism by which the Mayor can make spending and policy decisions. There is currently no requirement for the GLA to assess the climate impacts and/or contribution to the Mayor's net zero target as part of the Mayoral Decision process. We believe this should change. During this investigation, the GLA told us Mandate Delivery Plans will set out the actions needed to deliver net zero in London. ⁵¹ We are awaiting several Mayoral Decisions implementing these plans, and which are expected to shape the key policies and approaches that the Mayor and GLA will take for the remainder of this Mayoral term. It is vital that these decisions provide a full account of the climate impacts and contributions they will make towards net zero.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor should amend guidance for Mayoral decisions to include an analysis of the effect of the decision on CO_2 equivalent emissions in London.

The Mayoral Decisions implementing Mission and Mandate Delivery Plans must include a climate impact assessment, detailing analysis of the forecast emissions savings across the lifetime of the policy.

⁵⁰ GLA <u>Pathways to Net Zero Carbon by 2030</u> [Accessed 21 March]

⁵¹ GLA Submission to the Committee NZ002, p.9

Involving Londoners in decisions

To achieve the 2030 net zero target will require changes in how people live their lives. Analysis by the Climate Change Committee indicates that a third of the greenhouse gas emissions reductions needed in the UK require decisions by individuals and households. ⁵² It is therefore vital that all Londoners are engaged in this transition and informed about what they can do, and the potential benefits. As Dr James Richardson told us:

"We have to take people with us on the road to net zero. That means that we have to be asking people to do things that they feel are reasonable and that they can do within the resources, particularly in this cost of living crisis that we are in; driven, of course, by fossil fuels." ⁵³

This reflects the findings of work by the LSDC in 2023. The LSDC identified that while the majority of Londoners (89 per cent) want to prevent climate change, "deeper engagement is needed to build trust and give Londoners a say on the actions and issues affecting them". ⁵⁴ As Kathy Peach, Director of the Centre for Collective Intelligence Design at Nesta, told the Committee there needs to be a "complete pivot in how we approach behaviour change communication." She stated that behaviour change is very incremental, and "awareness campaigns alone do not work without extra incentives and without the wider changes to society that make those low carbon behaviours much easier for people, much cheaper for people and also more socially acceptable." ⁵⁵

Borough-led innovations in engagement

In the LSDC's evidence to the Committee it highlighted that "reaching into communities is very labour intensive" and therefore "boroughs have a significant role to play in enabling meaningful engagement with communities and Londoners." ⁵⁶

In this investigation, we have heard about some really positive examples of how London's boroughs are already engaging with Londoners around reducing climate emissions. We heard specifically about work ongoing or completed in Camden⁵⁷, Barnet⁵⁸, and Westminster⁵⁹.

In Barnet, we heard this work has been carried out under the banner of its climate strategy: BarNET ZERO. Yogita Popat from Barnet Council highlighted the importance of ensuring that engagement with the public is "not just a one-off" but has a "continued legacy". In Barnet this

⁵² UK Parliament, <u>Government must support behaviour change to meet climate targets</u>

⁵³ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 1, p.4

⁵⁴ London Sustainable Development Commission <u>London's Just Transition</u>

⁵⁵ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2

⁵⁶ LSDC submission to the Committee NZ003, p.21

⁵⁷ Involve, <u>Camden Climate Panel</u> [accessed: 28 March 2025]

⁵⁸ Sustainability - BarNET Zero | Barnet Council [accessed: 28 March 2025]

⁵⁹ Involve Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly [accessed: 28 March 2025]

has been through an innovation challenge where people can suggest innovative ideas, and through action groups where people work together to implement the themes of the citizens' assembly. She described it as "like joining us on our journey". ⁶⁰ She described how "one person has this ripple effect." The approach to the Barnet climate strategy [BarNET ZERO] is "a campaign for the community by the community". ⁶¹

Barnet Council also held a Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change and Biodiversity in 2023 as part of its BarNET ZERO strategy. This included six sessions over five dates, where a group of 40 randomly selected residents heard presentations and developed recommendations in response to the question: "Barnet has declared a climate emergency. What more can we do together to make Barnet more sustainable, now and in the future?" In parallel to this, twenty residents aged 12-17 participated in a Young People's Assembly. Twenty recommendations across five themes were agreed by the Assemblies and presented to the Council. ⁶³

Stephanie Draper Director of Innovation and Practice at Involve was involved in both the London Borough of Camden's ongoing climate panel and Westminster Council's Citizens' Climate Assembly in 2023. Speaking about this work she highlighted the importance of making engagement an ongoing part of governance:

"empowering people, giving people agency to make decisions and at the same time shifting power, involving community groups and enabling grassroots organisations to come up with their own suggestions too and having a conduit for them to be able to feed into decisions."⁶⁴

Reflecting on the work at Westminster Council, Stephanie Draper told the Committee that one of the most important outcomes was around trust. She told us:

"We have talked a lot about trust. From the Westminster Citizens' Assembly, 27 per cent of people beforehand felt listened to by Westminster. At the end, it was 63 per cent, and there was a 20 per cent increase in them trusting Westminster to do something different. I read a brilliant statistic that 84 per cent of people in the UK trust their neighbours, and we know all of the stats relating to how much they trust politicians. That is a helpful piece, but I think it is about better policymaking, helping with those stuck problems, and giving legitimacy for solutions because they are generated by people who are trusted." ⁶⁵

We commend the boroughs that are leading this innovative work to engage Londoners. It is vital that decisions-makers are out there listening and talking to Londoners on their terms and connecting them more closely with ownership of the solutions. As Yogita Popat told us when reflecting on why we engage, "This is their lives we are trying to protect, so let us listen to what

⁶⁰ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.4

⁶¹ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.16

⁶² LB Barnet <u>Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change and Biodiversity 2023</u> [Accessed 6 May 2025]

⁶³ LB Barnet <u>Discover Barnet's residents' recommendations to becoming a more sustainable borough [Accessed 6 May 2025]</u>

⁶⁴ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p. 5

⁶⁵ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.15

they are saying but take those methods to them and listen to see how they want to talk to

Innovative engagement techniques and Town Hall COPs

115 "66

We also heard about the use of innovative techniques in engaging people with net zero. Kathy Peach told us about work that Nesta ran in 2023 called the Strategy Room. This was a Citizens' Assembly-like immersive experience using videos of actors and iPads to rate different policies.⁶⁷

Kathy Peach told us "what we found was that there are actually very high levels of support for those bolder policy actions right across all demographics." After running 66 sessions with more than 630 participants across 12 local authorities in England in 2023, Nesta reported that participants who were able to discuss the net zero policies were more positive about them than other respondents in an online poll. People involved in the pilot rated seven out of ten of the policies 12 per cent higher on average, than people in a nationally representative YouGov survey of over 2,000 people commissioned by Nesta – and eight per cent higher on average across all 10 policies. 9

Kathy Peach concluded that "The public and political mandate is there, and I think there is an important role to really build that political mandate and make it much more visible, giving Assembly Members, councillors, and all elected representatives the confidence that they can make those choices and bring the public with them."

There is an opportunity for the Mayor to use such methods to engage with Londoners and help share perspectives and inform decisions.

After the Committee's public meetings, we participated in an informal briefing with the LSDC where experts reflected on the COP 29 outcome. As part of this we heard about Town Hall COPs [Conference of the Parties]. Town Hall COPs provide a way for local governments and communities to contribute local commitments to climate action ahead of the international COP30 conference being held in Belem, Brazil in November 2025.⁷¹ These kinds of events provide a way for local people to contribute to global processes.

Towards a net zero engagement strategy for London

Through this investigation, we have heard about various forms of engagement ranging from "citizens assemblies" to "participatory budgeting" via tech-enabled "strategy rooms". Much of this is already happening in London, but what we heard is missing is that engagement at scale. Kathy Peach told us that what is needed is "engagement at massive scale [...] to bring all of

⁶⁶ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.16

⁶⁷ Nesta Immersive experience pilot finds new approaches can build support for local action to combat climate change July 2023 [Accessed 29 April 2025]

⁶⁸ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.3

⁶⁹ Nesta, <u>Immersive experience pilot finds new approaches can build support for local action to combat climate change July 2023 [Accessed 29 April 2025]</u>

To Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.3

⁷¹ ICLEI, From Daring Cities to Town Hall COPs, how ICLEI is taking on local-to-global climate action 2 December 2024 [Accessed 2 May 2025]

May 2025

the public along and to make the public feel engaged". 72 For London to be able to meet its net zero target, engagement on the issue needs to be commensurate with the scale of the challenge. It also needs to reflect the combined and cross-London efforts that will be needed to reach the target.

A key part of any public engagement strategy must be to communicate in ways that connect with Londoners. Nameerah Hameed from Climate Outreach told the Committee that influencing behaviour "requires great story telling" and is about how "to connect to people". She stated influencing behaviour on climate is about "talking like a human", using terms like "warmer homes, cleaner air or healthier food" and "connecting with their lived realities", while making it affordable for people.⁷³

She also highlighted that Climate Outreach has undertaken research that has found that even the language of 'net zero' can be difficult for people to relate to. By contrast she said that: "People understood the term and the word "balance". The idea of restoring balance to emissions in the planet is appealing to people across all segments of our research"⁷⁴

Yoqita Popat from Barnet Council stated: "If we were all giving the same message across London at exactly the same time, that is really powerful, and it is subliminal as well." However, she also highlighted that she does not think there should be "one message for everything", adding that "we need to talk to different people in different ways." Climate Outreach describe this as combining a compelling core message about climate action, with stories that people can relate to.⁷⁶

Stephanie Draper from Involve told the Committee that the starting point is "involve, do not tell. Start where people are, rather than going out with the intention to persuade people to change their behaviour." She told us that she thought that the "Mayor's Office has a role to play in terms of setting out what good public engagement should look like". 78

We agree and want to see the Mayor building a sense of shared mission. The LSDC's evidence to the Committee highlighted a range of ways that the Mayor could work with others to communicate net zero. These included:

- Have a public engagement strategy on climate (which acknowledges the roles of partners across London)
- Create a standing citizens panel advising on a regular basis, which has strong links into the governance structures
- Provide funding for citizen engagement and behaviour change

⁷² Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2 p.4

⁷³ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2 p.1-2

⁷⁴ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2 p.8

⁷⁵ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2 p.7

⁷⁶ Climate Outreach What is the climate story in 2025?, February 2025 p.15-16

⁷⁷ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.2

⁷⁸ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.5

• Set a much bigger ambition for what public engagement could be across the capital, leveraging resources and offering people wider and more diverse ways to participate.⁷⁹

The UK does not currently have a UK-wide public engagement strategy on climate change or net zero. In March 2021, the UK Government published a research note on *Net zero public engagement and participation* which recognised the potential benefits of over-arching strategies. ⁸⁰ In December 2024, the Government announced it would set out its "approach to engaging the public in a Public Participation Strategy [on net zero] to be published in 2025."

In June 2019, six Select Committees of the House of Commons called a citizens' assembly to understand public preferences on how the UK should tackle climate change because of the impact these decisions will have on people's lives. The discussions were held between January to March 2020 and the conclusions were summarised in a report in September 2020.⁸²

The GLA's evidence to the Committee stated that it "communicates with Londoners on a wide variety of topics, including the climate, air quality and the wider environment, through a variety of media to promote the impacts of environmental issues and the opportunities for and benefits of tackling them."⁸³

GLA information campaigns

The GLA told us that examples of its communications around net zero include:

- London Climate Action Week (LCAW) a focal point in the year to allow a diverse set of stakeholders to come together to talk about the challenges and opportunities around tackling the climate emergency. London has had an annual Climate Action Week since 2019. This year's is planned for 21–29 June 2025. 84
- Committee of the Parties 26 (COP26) In the build up to COP26 in Glasgow, the GLA set out 10 things that people can do to help tackle the climate emergency.
- The London Climate Resilience Review.
- London-wide ULEZ which it said aimed to "save lives, protect the health of Londoners, and tackle the climate crisis". The GLA estimated that the expansion of the ULEZ to Outer London would lead to a reduction in carbon emissions of 27,000 tonnes.

⁷⁹ LSDC submission to the Committee NZ003, p.25

⁸⁰ Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy <u>Net zero public engagement and participation: a research note</u> March 2021

⁸¹ HM Government <u>Accelerating to net zero</u>. <u>Responding to the CCC Progress Report and delivering the Clean Energy Superpower Mission</u> December 2024 p.48

⁸² Climate Assembly UK The path to net zero

⁸³ GLA response to Call for Evidence NZ002 p.17

⁸⁴ London Climate Action Week [Accessed 2 May 2025]

- The Green, Wild and Free campaign, launched in August 2023, to highlight the steps the Mayor had taken to make London a greener, more environmentally friendly city and to encourage Londoners' engagement with 'greener' opportunities. ⁸⁵

Yet, Kathy Peach of Nesta told the Committee that the public engagement happening across London "is quite piecemeal. It is quite patchwork, and it is often driven by specific projects." The Committee can see there is the potential for a more comprehensive approach to engaging Londoners – one that places a much greater emphasis on the contributions everyone needs to make. This needs to learn the lessons from prior engagement and ensure that it speaks to Londoners in their terms, whilst not shying away from the scale of the challenge and the changes and contributions Londoners are going to need to make.

Fairness needs to be at the heart of any approach. Research by Climate Outreach (see box below) highlights the importance of taking fairness, and perceptions of fairness, seriously and sets out some principles for consideration when designing public engagement approaches and understanding how people will react to decisions.

Climate Outreach's research on communicating net zero

Climate Outreach has undertaken research mapping how the British population feel about net zero and what underpins their views on fairness. The project concluded with a set of 'Do's and don'ts for communicating net zero and fairness. These included:

- DO talk about doing your bit
- DON'T ignore differences in means and motivations
- DO invoke fairness, with care
- DON'T assume that fairness means the same thing to all
- DO acknowledge and channel feelings of unfairness towards shared concerns
- DON'T underestimate sensitivity to unfairness
- DO frame net zero as an opportunity for financial wellbeing
- DON'T pit economic growth against environmental protection
- DO build on the co-benefits of net zero
- DON'T get into technical detail at the expense of values or common sense
- DO actively build trust through finding the right messengers

⁸⁵ GLA response to Call for Evidence NZ002 p.17-18

⁸⁶ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.6

DON'T underestimate the critical role of trust. 87

Similarly, the LSDC's report into a 'just transition' stated that "London's plans to tackle the climate emergency must be fair." We heard from Tyrone Scott from War on Want who told us: "Questions of social and economic class must be at the centre of our responses to the climate crisis to address the huge inequalities between carbon footprints of the rich and the less well-off to prevent resistance to climate policies." Similarly, Friends of the Earth's evidence to the Committee recommended that "the Mayor prioritise amplifying the voices of marginalised communities, such as those affected most by climate change, in decision-making." A fair response to climate change demands that all Londoners are engaged in the decision-making taking place.

Recommendation 3

By October 2025, the Mayor should develop and publish a public engagement strategy for net zero, co-ordinated by the London Partnership Board and working with the London Assembly, with funding allocated to ensure that representative voices from all parts of the capital and backgrounds are heard in discussions about London's climate challenges.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should innovate further in public engagement approaches to involve Londoners in key climate decisions. This should start with convening a Town Hall climate conference at City Hall in the run-up to COP30 in November 2025, and could also explore new techniques, such as 'strategy rooms'.

Participatory budgeting

Participatory budgeting approaches can give people a sense of ownership around the decisions and allow them to feel part of policies. Kathy Peach highlighted the potential of participatory budgeting processes for engaging Londoners. She told the Committee: "Lisbon has a participatory budgeting programme where they allocate around €30 million every year for residents to decide how to allocate towards sustainability initiatives." She said, "That is really putting decision-making power into the public's hands". Paris has also introduced a participatory budget approach which allowed people to suggest improvements for their local area. In 2016, just over 150,000 people voted on how to spend around €100 million, demonstrating the buy-in it generated from Parisians.

⁸⁷ Extracts summarised from Climate Outreach Net zero, fairness and climate politics [Accessed 7 May 2025]

⁸⁸ Environment Committee, September meeting, Panel 1, p.2

⁸⁹ Friends of the Earth London Network submission to the Committee NZ001, p.3

⁹⁰ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.6

⁹¹ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 Meeting, Panel 2, p.6

⁹² EBRD Participatory budgeting: Paris, France

⁹³ Expanding the imagination of democracy: PB in Paris, [Accessed 4 April 2025]

Elements of participatory budgeting have been tried in London in the past, such as using Spacehive platform to co-fund community projects through the Make London fund. ⁹⁴ Catherine Barber told us:

"our regeneration team has worked on this, particularly Crowdfund London, which raised £6 million through 25,000 Londoners donating money for projects in the city. That was about fostering participation, community cohesion, and then some of the projects that they backed included things which are relevant for the environment, so parks, gardens, teaching communities about nature, sustainable food growing, etc." ⁹⁵

As this has been tried in London by the GLA in the past, the Committee can see that it could be repeated again for climate-related projects. We can see there are opportunities for the Mayor to develop new approaches to allocating his budget to give people the opportunity to set priorities and feed into decisions.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor and London boroughs should pilot participatory budgeting approaches which would allocate funding according to local priorities tied to the delivery of net zero as part of the next GLA and municipal budgets for 2026/27. The GLA should amend its budget guidance for the 2026/27 budget to reflect this approach.

⁹⁴ Spacehive, <u>Make London - About</u>; GLA <u>Mayor announces the 39 Make London projects he is backing</u>15 March 2021

⁹⁵ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 2, p.19

Driving collaborative action across London

Shortly after his re-election in May 2024, the Mayor re-stated that: "Reaching net zero by 2030 will require collaboration around the joint mission and this will be a core focus of this new Mayoral term". ⁹⁶ This renewed commitment to net zero is welcome. The Committee wants to see evidence soon that progress has in fact accelerated.

Dr Ashok Sinha, Chair of the LSDC, told us in September 2025 that he rated the chances of meeting the net zero target at two or three out of 10 if things continue without change, but that this could increase to eight or nine out of 10 if decisionmakers, including the government, the Mayor and local councils, "take the right decisions". ⁹⁷ It is vital that this happens.

Net zero targets across London boroughs

The GLA told us that it recognises that London boroughs are important partners in delivering on its net zero target. In evidence to the Committee it stated: "The GLA works in close partnership with all London Boroughs – to identify our optimum respective roles and responsibilities across a range of climate related themes in London so that we are best able to tackle the climate emergency." 98

We support the principle that greater collaboration between the GLA and boroughs, facilitated through London Councils and the London Partnership Board will support more shared action.

Yet, we found a mixed picture when we came to review commitments boroughs have made across London (see **Figure 5**).

We found that nearly all boroughs have made net zero commitments – with most setting organisational commitments to reduce their own emissions. 30 boroughs have declared a climate emergency, and 32 (all but one – Bexley), have set an emissions reduction target for council activities. 99 Most have set this for 2030, with some setting this sooner, and a couple setting targets for 2040 or 2045.

We also found that not all boroughs have set borough-wide emissions targets – which aim to ensure that the overall emissions that take place in the geographic area of the borough reach net zero. Ten boroughs have set targets for net zero by 2030 – which would align with the Mayor's London-wide target – while others have set dates from 2038 to 2050.

⁹⁶ MQ2024/1504 Net Zero Target (1)

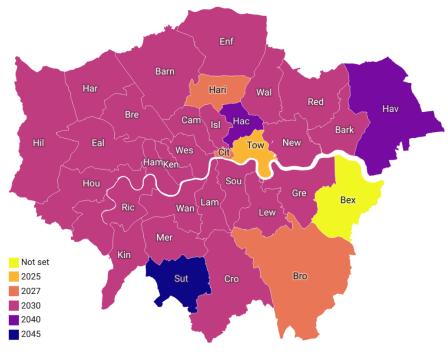
⁹⁷ Environment Committee, 19 September 2024 meeting, Panel 1, p.9

⁹⁸ GLA Submission to the Committee NZ002, p.9

⁹⁹ For full analysis - see Appendix II – Bexley's statement does recognise the government's 2050 target. Where boroughs have not indicated a different target for organisational emissions compared with borough-wide emissions, organisational emissions targets are shown as the same as borough-wide targets.

Figure 5. London Borough net zero commitments

London boroughs' net zero/carbon neutral targets (organisational emissions)



Map data: © Crown copyright and database right 2018 $\, \cdot$ Created with Datawrapper

London boroughs' net zero/carbon neutral targets (boroughwide emissions)



Map data: © Crown copyright and database right 2018 • Created with Datawrapper

Source: Scrutiny Research Unit analysis of net zero targets by London Boroughs. Where boroughs have not indicated a different target for organisational emissions compared with borough-wide emissions, organisational emissions targets are shown as the same as borough-wide targets. However, organisational targets are not assumed to apply borough wide unless stated. Full analysis is shown in Appendix II

The Mayor cannot compel boroughs to set targets that align with his own 2030 deadline. Yet, this varied approach across London is confusing, and unhelpful for Londoners who want to know what they need to do. The Mayor needs to work with London Councils to do more to bring together key partners across London, and encourage the boroughs to set 2030 net zero targets – and develop plans to deliver them.

Convening on net zero

The LSDC's evidence to the Committee highlighted the importance of the London Partnership Board that the Mayor co-chairs as a mechanism that could bring together this action across London. ¹⁰⁰ Dr Ashok Sinha told the Committee: "The Mayor is using his convening power […] in the London Partnership Board […]. I would like to see the Mayor doing more of that convening." ¹⁰¹

In its evidence to the Committee, the GLA told us that the actions needed to deliver net zero in London will be delivered internally through Mandate Delivery Plans:

"The Mandate Delivery Plans will set out how the Mayoral Mandates will be delivered, and they will start to highlight what needs to be done and the key stakeholders that we will need to engage with to get to net zero. These plans will highlight that we will need to engage with many different stakeholders and on a range of issues." ¹⁰²

There also needs to be strong delivery mechanisms across London. At the London Partnership Board meeting in December 2024, progress was shared on the joint missions between the GLA and London Councils on housing, growth, and health. It was stated that "discussions with partners on the potential scope of the energy and environment mission are expected to get underway in early 2025", with the potential to build on ongoing work on a new London-wide approach to retrofitting homes.¹⁰³

The Committee welcomes these initiatives and efforts to align priorities and ensure that organisations work together to achieve the goal of balancing London's emissions. However, we are conscious of the urgency of action and want the pace of progress to increase, with greater co-ordination and shared delivery across London.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should set out by September 2025 how he will use the London Partnership Board and its new Energy Mission to provide careful and active monitoring, and accelerate action towards his net zero 2030 target.

¹⁰⁰ LSDC submission to the Committee NZ003, p23, p.20

¹⁰¹ Environment Committee, September meeting, Panel 1, p.12

¹⁰² GLA Submission to the Committee NZ002, p.9

¹⁰³ London Partnership Board <u>Development of London's missions</u> 17 December 2024 Para 6.2

Funding the net zero transition

The scale of financing net zero in London is likely to run to billions of pounds. The GLA estimates that achieving the Mayors net zero target will require £75 billion of investment in infrastructure by 2030. 104 This represents an additional £27 billion funding over the £48.3 billion the Climate Change Committee identified would be required to be invested in London by 2030 to meet the UK's 2050 target. 105 As Dr Ashok Sinha told the Committee, "we are going to need enormous quantities of private sector finance to go into new infrastructure, infrastructure improvements." 106 So too did the Mayor in March 2025, when he told the Assembly at Mayor's Question Time: "Investment into London's green economy will be predominantly driven by the private sector". 107

Unlocking private finance

London is uniquely well-positioned in the UK to capitalise on its status as a global financial hub to mobilise private finance to support the net zero transition. As Dr James Richardson reflected:

"London is the finance centre of the world. There are real opportunities there in probably the strongest business within the London area for financing this around the world. Insurance, again, you have similar issues as well as on the adaptation side where insurance companies will need to be nimble to work out how to deal with risks for which they do not have a long track record of data." 108

In 2023, the GLA established the London Climate Finance Facility (LCFF), and subsequently launched the Green Finance Fund, which has the potential to invest up to £500 million. ¹⁰⁹ The GLA states that the LCFF's aims are:

- 1. **"To unlock** billions of long-term, flexible, private finance to support the decarbonisation of London's buildings, energy and transport systems, thereby tackling the triple dangers of toxic air pollution, climate change and congestion.
- 2. **To accelerate** significantly the development and delivery of climate and environmental projects, working with strategic partners.
- 3. **To build** on London's existing financing capabilities to secure investment for London and strengthen its competitiveness."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ GLA, London Net Zero 2030: An Updated Pathway p.17

¹⁰⁵ GLA, <u>London Net Zero 2030: An Updated Pathway</u> p.19

¹⁰⁶ Environment Committee, September meeting, Panel 1 p.6

¹⁰⁷ MQ2025/0824 [Cost of Net Zero] 25 March 2025

¹⁰⁸ Environment Committee, November meeting, <u>Panel 1</u>, p.12-13

¹⁰⁹ GLA Submission to the Committee NZ002 p.13

¹¹⁰ GLA, London Climate Finance Facility [Accessed 28 March 2025]

In March 2025, the Mayor told the Assembly that the LCFF had "made over £1.1 billion available to finance low carbon projects in London." 111

As part of this investigation, we contacted the Green Finance Institute (GFI) to understand their views on how the plan to increase funding is progressing. It praised the GLA's commitment to this area of work. But it highlighted that more work is needed to make potential projects ready for private finance to invest in at scale:

"there is undoubtedly a sufficient pipeline of projects that could absorb investment from a mix of public and private sources of capital. However, there is a notable disconnect between notional projects and those that are investment-ready. Accordingly, additional work on project development is required; the structure of the Green Finance Fund enables the recycling of a portion of the repayment of loans for exactly this type of technical assistance." 112

The Deputy Mayor told us that this was the aim of the zero-carbon accelerator which has been recently launched. He told us that this: "is really important for us because that is around how do we make sure that we develop a pipeline of projects that can really be investable for the private sector and that can really unlock some of the ambitions that we want to see." 113

In this investigation, we took a high-level view and did look in detail at the projects that have been supported by the Mayor's Green Finance Fund. While we have received indications that the fund is working as planned, the sheer scale of investment needed to achieve net zero by 2030 is extremely challenging. Given that this is an important area to track, we feel that it would be helpful to have more information publicly available to inform decisions, and welcome the information provided as part of the GLA's climate budget.

Devolution of funding from Government

As noted by the Institute for Government, "England's mayors [...] receive little funding to work specifically on net zero objectives". The LSDC's evidence to the Committee described the situation in London to the Committee. It said:

"The GLA and boroughs have limited fiscal powers, relying heavily on council tax and business rates to deliver core services. Non-statutory provisions (such as climate measures) are increasingly squeezed, particularly in the boroughs, and are reliant on limited short-term and unpredictable government grants. This means there is little discretionary investment that can be deployed at scale."

The LSDC said that devolution of powers and funding from Government would "positively impact the Mayor's ability to take action". 116

¹¹¹ MQ2025/0824 [Cost of Net Zero] 25 March 2025

¹¹² GFI submission to the Committee, November 2024

¹¹³ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 2, p.9

¹¹⁴ IfG, Net zero and devolution: The role of England's mayors in the climate transition, 2 February 2023

¹¹⁵ LSDC submission to the Committee, NZ003, p.23

¹¹⁶ LSDC submission to the Committee, NZ003, p.23

In January 2023, the Conservative Government published an independent review of its approach to delivering its net zero target, which was led by Chris Skidmore MP. This report suggested providing additional backing to 'trailblazer cities' that want to go further and faster on net zero, with the aim of reaching net zero by 2030. The Government's response to this review followed in March 2023. It neither supported nor rejected the suggestion to back a trailblazer city to hit net zero by 2030. The

The Committee would welcome Government backing for London to be that trailblazer city. Since the Skidmore review was published, a new Government has been elected. The new Government has adopted a 'missions-based' approach to governing. Clean energy is one of the five missions – part of which includes a commitment to accelerate towards net zero. ¹¹⁹ The government has set a target for clean sources of energy to produce at least 95 per cent of Great Britain's electricity generation by 2030. ¹²⁰ It has also published a White Paper on devolution in England. ¹²¹

The devolution White Paper identified that some Mayoral authorities would receive an integrated financial settlement for 2025-26, alongside an intention to provide multi-year settlements in the coming years. ¹²² Our investigation finished taking evidence before the White Paper was published. However, indications that indicate multi-year financial settlements for Mayors were included in the Budget in autumn. ¹²³

Reflecting on the budget, Catherine Barber told the Committee, "it was encouraging to see in the budget documents the reference to an integrated single settlement for London from 2026/27 onwards". Similarly, the Deputy Mayor told us, "We have been looking at a multifinancing package settlement for London to be able to do a lot of this work that we are talking about". He added that the multi year funding package would allow the GLA to "to have a bit more strategic thinking [...] to help us reach our 2030 targets." ¹²⁵

The Committee agree that further devolution of budgets to London to scale up investment in energy efficiency, retrofits of buildings, and the transition to net zero is needed.

¹¹⁷ HM Government, Mission Zero: Independent Review of Net Zero January 2023 p.199

¹¹⁸ HM Government, Responding to the Independent Review of Net Zero's Recommendations, March 2023, p.47

¹¹⁹ HM Government, Plan for Change: Milestones for Mission-Led Government, 5 December 2024

¹²⁰ HM Government, <u>Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A new era of clean electricity</u> December 2024 p12. This is likely to support progress to the Mayor's target. The Element Energy report states: "If it was possible to achieve a fully renewable electricity supply for London by 2030, emissions could be reduced by close to 2 MtCO2e in all scenarios" Element Energy (2022) <u>Analysis of a Net Zero 2030 Target for Greater London p.5</u>

¹²¹ HM Government English Devolution White Paper December 2024

¹²² HM Government English Devolution White Paper December 2024

¹²³ HM Government Autumn Budget 2024 para 3.31

¹²⁴ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 2, p.8

¹²⁵ Environment Committee, 6 November 2024 meeting, Panel 2, p.6

Recommendation 7

The Government should back London as a 'net zero trailblazer city' that is aiming to move further and faster. The devolution reforms currently taking place offer an opportunity to support London's 2030 ambitions with a multi-year financial settlement.

Committee Activity

Committee activity

The Committee held two meetings with experts and key stakeholders:

Part 1 - Thursday 19 September 2024

Panel 1

- Dr Ashok Sinha, CEO, Ashden / Chair, London Sustainable Development Commission
- Tyrone Scott, Senior Movement Building and Activism Officer, War on Want

Panel 2

- Nameerah Hameed, Advocacy Manager, Climate Outreach
- Stephanie Draper, Director of Innovation and Practice, Involve
- Yogita Popat, Programme Director, Culture and Sustainability, Barnet Council
- Kathy Peach, Director of Centre for Collective Intelligence Design (CCID), Nesta

Part 2 - Wednesday 6 November 2024

Panel 1

- Dr James Richardson, Acting CEO, Climate Change Committee
- Rozanne McMillan Associate Director of Cities, States and Regions Partnerships and UK, Middle East, CDP [Formerly known as 'Carbon Disclosure Project']

Panel 2

- Mete Coban MBE, Deputy Mayor, Environment and Energy
- Catherine Barber, Assistant Director, Environment and Energy Unit, Greater London Authority (GLA)
- Pete Daw, Head of Climate Change, GLA

The Committee also received three submissions to its <u>Call for Evidence</u>, from the GLA, London Sustainable Development Commission, and Friends of the Earth London.

Appendix I: Key targets of the Accelerated Green pathway

Sector	Area	Key targets
Buildings	Energy efficiency – such as improved insulation	- 37% reduction in energy used in heating spaces and water ('heat demand') across domestic buildings and 39% reduction across nondomestic buildings by 2030 compared with 2020
	Low carbon heating	 60% of domestic heating systems are low carbon (such as heat pumps or district heating) by 2030
	Heat Pumps	 2.2 million heat pumps installed by 2030 280,000 heat pumps installed annually at the peak deployment
	District Heating	 460,000 domestic district heating connections installed by 2030
	Phase out of fossil fuel heating systems	 Fossil fuel heating systems banned from new developments from 2025 Fossil fuel heating system replacements banned from 2026, with exceptions in areas expected to remain connected to grid (using biomethane)
	Solar PV on rooftops	- 1.5 GW by 2030 – up from 151 megawatts (MW) in 2022. 126
	Hydrogen	- O.2 TWh of hydrogen used in district heating by 2030
Transport	Reducing vehicle use	- 27% reduction in car distance travelled compared with 2018
	Limited recovery of air travel	 Limited recovery of air travel demand by 2030 following COVID-19 levels (reaching 50% of 2018 levels)
	Increase in electric / zero emission road transport Use of sustainable	 46% of car travel in London zero emission by 2030 34% of van travel zero emission Zero emission bus fleet by 2030 5% sustainable aviation fuel by 2030
	aviation fuel	370 Sustainable aviation rue by 2030

Based on Appendix 1 of GLA, Pathways to Net Zero Carbon by 2030 (p23-25)

¹²⁶ MQ 2022/2588 Solar PV installed capacity data in London (2)

Appendix II: Collated London Borough Net Zero Targets

Analysis by the Scrutiny Research Unit – references accessed April 2025

	Tanast fan	Townst for	Climata	Reference
	all	Target for		кетегепсе
		council	emergency declared	
	borough emissions	emissions	deciared	
Barking and	2050	2030	2020	Barking and Dagenham Net Zero Carbon
Dagenham	2030	2030	2020	Roadmaps and Framework decision
Barnet	2042	2030	2022	BarNET Zero
Bexley	2042	2030	2022	
Бехіеу	_	_	_	Climate Change Statement note: refers to the Government's goal of net zero by
				2050 but does not set a specific goal for
				Bexley
Brent	2030	2030	2019	Our response to the climate emergency
	2030	2030		ar respense to the chinate emergency
Bromley	_	2027	_	Net zero emissions for 2027
Camden	2030	_	2019	The climate emergency - Camden Council
City of	2040	2027	-	Climate Action Strategy
London	2010	2027		elimate riction strategy
Croydon	2030	_	2019	Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan
,				
Ealing	2030	2030	2019	Climate and Ecological Emergency
				Strategy,
Enfield	2040	2030	2019	Climate Action Plan 2024
Greenwich	2030	_	2019	Carbon Neutral Plan
	2030	2040	2019	
Hackney	_	2040	2019	Climate Emergency Declaration
Hammersmith	2030	2030	2019	Hammersmith and Fulham 2030: Climate
and Fulham	2041	2027	2010	and Ecology Strategy
Haringey 	2041	2027	2019	Net Zero Carbon Haringey
Harrow	2030	2030	2019	Living Harrow, Climate and Nature
Havering	2040	2040	2023	Strategy Climate Change Action Plan 2024-2027
Havering	2040	2040 2030		
Hillingdon	_	2030	2020	Strategic Climate Action Plan
Hounslow	-	2030	2019	Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-
				<u>2030</u>
Islington	2030		2019	Vision 2030: Building a Net Zero Carbon
				Islington by 2030
Kensington	2040	2030	2019	Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022-
and Chelsea				2027

Kingston	2038	2030	2019	Climate Action Plan
Upon Thames				
Lambeth	-	2030	2019	Becoming a Net Zero Council by 2030
Lewisham	2030	2030	2019	Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan
				<u>2020-2030</u>
Merton	2050	2030	2019	Climate Strategy and Action Plan
Newham	2050	2030	2019	Newham declares climate emergency –
				Newham Council
Redbridge		2030	2019	Climate Change Action Plan
	-	(carbon		
		neutral)		
		2050		
		(carbon		
		zero)		
Richmond	2043	2030	2019	Climate Emergency Strategy
upon Thames				
Southwark	2030	-	2019	Climate Change Strategy
Sutton	2045	_	2019	Full Council Report 22 July 2019
Tower	2045	2025	2019	Net Zero Carbon Plan
Hamlets				
Wandsworth	2043	2030	2019	Climate Change_
Waltham	2030	_	2019	Waltham Forest Climate Action Plan
Forest				
City of	2040	2030	2019	Climate action plan - Westminster City
Westminster				Council

Other formats and languages

If you, or someone you know needs this report in large print or braille, or a copy of the summary and main findings in another language, then please call us on: 020 7983 4100 or email assembly.translations@london.gov.uk

Chinese

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