

Call for Evidence: Are London's homes ready for a heatwave?

The London Assembly investigates issues of importance to Londoners and holds the Mayor to account. The London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee has launched an investigation to understand how overheating will affect London's housing stock – and how Londoners experience that – in the short- and long-term, as a result of climate change.

Below is information about the investigation and Call for Evidence, as well as key questions that the Committee is interested in.

Who can submit evidence?

This Call for Evidence is open to all who would like to respond.

Why is the Committee exploring this topic?

Extreme heat is becoming an increasing problem in London as a result of climate change. The 2022 heatwave saw record temperatures recorded across the UK, with London hitting 40°C that July. Throughout the year there were 3,271 heat related deaths in England, 387 of which were recorded in London.¹ London is particularly vulnerable to heat due to the urban heat island (UHI) effect, a phenomenon where higher temperatures are experienced in built up areas due to the heat absorptive properties of buildings and roads. One study indicated that the UHI has led to an increase in temperatures up to 10°C in certain locations compared with neighbouring areas.²

Overheating disproportionately affects young children, older people, pregnant people, and those with underlying health conditions or disabilities, who are more susceptible to dehydration, heat stress and hospitalisation.³

Partially as a result of the 2022 heatwaves, there has been an increased interest in how homes in the UK and London deal with extreme heat. In July 2022, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) published a report exploring the risks to health, wellbeing and productivity posed by overheating buildings. The report concluded that around one fifth of UK homes are already overheating in summers and that by 2050 heat related deaths may treble without further adaptation actions. The CCC argued that proactive actions are needed in urban design, including passive and active measures to limit the consequences of heat waves. The CCC also highlighted the lack of associated targets or goals for resilience standards at a national, local or sectoral level. It stated that this makes the full scale of investment needed to deliver increase climate resilience impossible to assess.⁴ The Government's Warm Homes Plan (2026) states that buildings are not currently built to deal with high summer temperatures and that some are at significant risk of overheating.⁵

The Mayor has commissioned several reports into how London's buildings deal with extreme heat and other impacts of climate change, including the Roofs Designed to Cool (2023), Properties Vulnerable to Heat Impact Report (2024),

¹ Mayor of London, [The London Climate Resilience Review](#) (2024)

² LSE Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, [Resilient net zero: Exploring low-emission cooling solutions to extreme heat](#) (2025)

³ [UEL leads policy action to protect homes from heat | University of East London](#)

⁴ Climate Change Committee, [Risks to health, wellbeing and productivity from overheating in buildings](#) (2022)

⁵ UK Government, [Warm Homes Plan](#) (2026)

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and the London Climate Resilience Review (2024). One of the core recommendations from the London Climate Resilience Review is the development of a Heat Plan for London, which was consulted on in 2025 and is expected in Spring 2026.⁶

Currently, the London Plan uses the cooling hierarchy to encourage new developments to adopt "passive" measures, as opposed to active measures such as air conditioning. Passive measures are approaches to cooling which do not require mechanical or electrical input. This includes urban trees, green roofs, shading and permeable paving.⁷ The 2021 London Plan states that the spread of active measures such as air conditioning systems is "not desirable as these have significant energy requirements and, under conventional operation, expel hot air, thereby adding to the urban heat island effect."⁸ These measures, alongside historical trends and national policy, have contributed to air conditioning take up being much slower in Britain than in other countries. In 2020, around 5 per cent of British households had air conditioning units, much lower than countries like France (25 per cent), Germany (19 per cent) and the Netherlands (14 per cent).⁹

Will responses be published?

For transparency, we will publish most written submissions and the name of the individual or organisation that submitted it. Exceptions to this are applied where there is a legal reason for non-publication or if there is a safeguarding or welfare

issue. If you would like your evidence not to be published with your name or to not be published, 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. Read the [GLA's privacy notice](#).

What will the evidence I provide be used for?

The responses to this Call for Evidence may be used to inform recommendations to the Mayor, which will likely be published in a report or a letter.

If information and/or quotations from your submission to this Call for Evidence are used in this publication, we will cite you. We will inform those who have submitted evidence about the outcome of the investigation.

How do I submit evidence?

Please send evidence by email to: scrutiny@london.gov.uk

The deadline for submission is **1 May 2026**.

The Committee welcomes any evidence relevant to the following principal questions:

⁶ Talk London, [London's risk for rising temperatures](#), page accessed 27 January 2026

⁷ LSE Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, [Resilient net zero: Exploring low-emission cooling solutions to extreme heat](#) (2025)

⁸ Mayor of London, [The London Plan](#) (2021)

⁹ Centre for Cities, [Breaking the Bottlenecks: Reforming 'anti-supply measures' to support urban housebuilding](#) (2025)

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1. What is the overheating risk currently facing London's homes and how is this risk evolving?
 - a. What proportion of homes in London are currently at risk of overheating? How is this likely to change in the future?
 - b. How does overheating affect different demographics, including tenure of housing, age, disability and gender?
 - c. How is the risk of overheating currently assessed in new developments? Is this sufficient to ensure London's homes are resilient?
 - d. How do different building typologies contribute differently to the urban heat island effect and overheating in London?
 - e. How is the risk of overheating different in London than in other parts of the UK?
 - f. Are homes being built now which will be vulnerable to overheating? If so, which factors contribute to this (planning, building regulations, energy efficiency standards, etc)?
2. How should we be tackling overheating?
 - a. What changes would you like to see made to the London Plan to better manage the risk of overheating in homes?
 - b. Is the London Plan's current stance on air conditioning [Policy SI 4] still appropriate?
 - c. What should developers do to ensure that the homes constructed today will be heat resilient?
 - d. What support should be made available to homeowners and tenants to better manage overheating risk?
 - e. Are there developments in London that manage heat risk well?
 - f. Are there examples of cities which have adopted strategies to tackle heat risk which London can learn from?

Please select those most relevant to you or your organisation – you do not need to answer all questions.

Please feel free to share any other information on this topic you feel would be useful to the Committee.

About the Committee

The Planning and Regeneration Committee holds main responsibility for examining the London Plan, the **London Legacy Development Corporation** (LLDC) and the **Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation** (OPDC). Read more about our [previous work](#).

Committee Members

- **James Small-Edwards (Chair) (Labour)**
- **Andrew Boff (Deputy Chair) (Conservative)**
- Sem Moema (Labour)
- Elly Baker (Labour)
- Zoë Garbett (Green)
- Shaun Bailey (Conservative)

Contact

Submissions

Scrutiny@london.gov.uk

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