



Gareth Roberts AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

Sir Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
(Sent by email)

3 July 2026

Dear Sadiq,

Improving access to nature in London

Data shows differences in the proportion of people who spend time in nature by ethnic background and income level.¹ We are therefore keen to understand more details about your plans for improving access to nature in London. This includes how you intend to support implementation of the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which includes priorities to “help people enjoy nature” and for “bigger, better, more connected and more habitats”.²

Following the March 2026 announcement from the Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy that the GLA is providing £1.5 million to support a new West London Regional Park,³ the Environment Committee held a meeting on 3 June exploring the role that regional parks and leisure walking routes play in improving access to nature and green spaces in London.⁴ We heard that the Regional Park was one of three confirmed projects to be paid for by a £7.5 million GLA fund for “five to nine” strategic projects with the rest planned to be announced “later this year”.⁵ Graham Horton from Natural England also confirmed that funding would be provided from the Department for

¹ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1 p9

² GLA, [London Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#), March 2026, p10

³ Mete Coban MBE: “I’m delighted to announce that @MayorofLondon is funding a new West London Regional Park with £1.5 million. This will bring nature closer to people’s homes - connecting 585,000 Londoners within a 30-minute walk, including a 13km route linking parks and waterways.” [X post](#), 10 March 2026

⁴ [Environment Committee, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#)

⁵ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1 p24

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to “to enable the GLA to start turning the LNRS into delivery actions on the ground.”⁶

We realise that it may not be possible to give the Committee full details of these projects before they are announced. However, we would be interested in learning more about the criteria used to prioritise this funding to ensure as much transparency as possible. We note that some areas of London, such as South East London, appear to have fewer ‘regional parks’, so further information about how the geographic spread of interventions is being assessed would also be welcome.

We therefore request that in response to this letter you share:

- **The criteria being used to prioritise funding for strategic projects, including how the geographic spread of interventions is being assessed.**
- **Further details, including the decision papers, for the strategic projects already announced.**
- **Further details about the funding from the Government for the implementation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including current plans for how this will be spent.**

London Plan green space standards

Abby Crisostomo, Head of Green Infrastructure at the GLA, told us that the GLA had commissioned an evidence review of access to green space measures ahead of the next London Plan.⁷ She explained that the review had concluded that “boroughs should set local standards specific to their circumstances locally and the amount and availability of accessible green space”.⁸ She also stated that the GLA is looking to “streamline” existing measures of deficiency in the next London Plan.⁹

While Graham Horton from Natural England told us that the “sweet spot”,¹⁰ as defined by its accessible green space standard,¹¹ is three hectares of locally accessible green space per 1,000 people, he acknowledged that in London there are “significant areas that are well below that”.¹² Abby Crisostomo described Natural England’s measure as “a benchmark for what people can be hitting”.¹³ While we recognise the potential benefits of the GLA’s proposed approach in giving greater flexibility for local circumstances, we would be concerned if this led to a watering down of green space standards overall.

⁶ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1 p22

⁷ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1, p10; Land Use Consultants (LUC) for GLA, [Public Open Space Mechanisms Review](#) – Feb 2026

⁸ Note: this is with regards to the Natural England GI Framework standard of 3 hectares per 1000 people. London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1 p10.

⁹ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1 p10

¹⁰ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1 p9

¹¹ “Local authorities should have at least 3 hectares of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population and there is no net loss or reduction in capacity of accessible greenspace per 1,000 population at an area-wide scale.” Natural England, [Accessible green space standard](#), [accessed: 17 June 2026]

¹² London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1 p9

¹³ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1 p10

Recommendation 1: The GLA should set clear guidelines in the next London Plan with ambitious targets to improve access to green space where most needed.

Promoting walking routes that connect people with nature.

Leisure walking routes can also provide the kind of everyday access to green spaces that bring important benefits. As Hana Sutch from Go Jauntly told us, simple things like “the breeze on your face” and listening to birdsong “can bring about clinically significant improvements to mental wellbeing,” and there can be real benefits for people to incorporate nature into their everyday lives.¹⁴ Graham Horton also told us that Natural England’s studies had found “significant improvement to their mental health and physical health by being prescribed access and time in nature.”¹⁵

We support efforts to raise awareness of walking routes that help people engage with nature and make them more attractive and inviting to people. During the meeting Sam Parry, Chief Programme Officer for West London Regional Park at Ealing Council explained how the GLA funding will support new wayfinding to draw people into the new regional park, with “green fingers” branching into surrounding areas forming a key part of the longer-term vision. He highlighted the need to “use the design to draw people in and make them feel comfortable using those green spaces.”¹⁶ Kate Conto from the Ramblers agreed that physical wayfinding is “important for people who do not have a lot of experience, who do not have a lot of confidence, people who may not be aware that the route is even there”.¹⁷ We welcome this approach, particularly if it can build wider connections through public transport links to improve access at a regional scale.

Your 2018 London Environment Strategy included a focus on supporting leisure walking routes through Transport For London (TfL),¹⁸ and we are pleased to see that these commitments were reiterated in TfL’s new Walking and Wheeling Action Plan (WWAP), published in May 2026.¹⁹ Alex Goodship, Head of Active Travel and Public Transport at TfL, explained how the WWAP also commits TfL to supporting work to improve connectivity from public transport hubs to waterways and green spaces, and we would be interested to learn more details as plans develop.²⁰

In our meeting, however, we heard about the need for ongoing promotion of leisure walking routes. For example, Hana Sutch from Go Jauntly explained that uptake of the Green Link walk appears to have fallen in the two years since it was launched. She highlighted opportunities for TfL to do more promotion – observing no TfL social media posts promoting walking in March, April, or May, which she described as “prime walking season”.²¹

It is encouraging that the WWAP includes a commitment to support the London Walking Festival “through integrated communications channels”, and to promote the proposed new river walk

¹⁴ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 2 p8

¹⁵ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1 p15

¹⁶ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 1 p21

¹⁷ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 2 p7

¹⁸ Mayor of London [London Environment Strategy](#) Proposal 5.1.1.c p157-158

¹⁹ TfL, [Walking and wheeling action plan](#), May 2026 Theme 5, pp39-41

²⁰ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 2 p2

²¹ London Assembly, [Environment Committee, meeting transcript, 3 June 2026, 2pm](#), Panel 2 p11

planned to run between Shepherd's Bush and Bexley "through maps, wayfinding, digital tools and events".²² While the WWAP also reiterates the commitments in the Leisure Walking Plan, published in 2022, to promote the Walk London Network,²³ there is a need to ensure that this support is ongoing and goes beyond just promoting new routes.

Recommendation 2: TfL should share detailed delivery plans about how it intends to increase promotion of leisure walking routes in the Walk London Network, as well as everyday walking routes that allow people to connect with nature. This could include signage in stations, advertising space, and online tools.

The Committee would welcome a response to this letter by 14 August 2026. Please send your response by email to the Committee's Clerk, Hannah Barlow (hannah.barlow@london.gov.uk).

Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gareth Roberts', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gareth Roberts AM
Chair of the Environment Committee

²² TfL, [Walking and wheeling action plan](#), May 2026, p41

²³ TfL, [Walk London Network](#) [Accessed 17 June 2026]