

Dear Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London),

I am writing to respond to your consultation on the draft New London Plan; we must do more to tackle air pollution now! People cannot breathe. Since I moved to London I have developed allergies and severe sinusitis and asthma. More must be done to tackle the huge amounts of pollution - including cigarette smoke and car emissions - on our streets.

I believe that everyone in London has the right to breathe clean air, have access to nature and to benefit from clean energy. I am therefore pleased to see policies in the new London Plan which seek to address these important environmental issues. These include policies to protect our Greenbelt and Metropolitan Open Land, a ban on fracking, and a commitment to London becoming zero carbon.

However, I believe the London Plan could be improved in the following ways:

Renewable Energy & Climate Change

I support the ambition for London to become a zero carbon city, however this needs to be achieved sooner than 2050 if we are to meet our global commitments to tackle climate change. To do this, London needs to rapidly embrace renewable energy, including solar. The London Plan should include a clear policy to facilitate, support and promote the uptake of solar energy.

This could be achieved by adding a strong policy on solar energy (using wording in supporting text 9.2.3), by mentioning renewable energy infrastructure including solar technologies in Policy S13, and by requiring all new homes to be zero carbon.

Green Spaces & Nature

Making London greener is essential for people's health and wellbeing. Yet many local green spaces face pressure from new development. The Plan must recognise that loss of green space cannot always be made up for through green roofs and sustainable drainage schemes, valuable though these features are (para 4.2.9). Policy should make clear that provision of and access to green space should always be considered when planning new development.

I welcome the reference to urban greening in Policy D7 Public Realm. This should include a broader commitment to, and requirement for, conserving and restoring urban nature rather than the current common approach to installing trees in concrete or tubs and planting of low nature value.

Clean Air

With 10,000 Londoners dying prematurely every year from air pollution, I support the London Plan policy to improve air quality (SI1). Policy T8 states that 'The Mayor will oppose the expansion of Heathrow Airport unless it can be shown that no additional noise or air quality harm would result, and that the benefits of future regulatory and technology improvements would be fairly shared with affected communities'. The Mayor should consistently apply this policy across all new infrastructure projects, including the proposed Silvertown tunnel which will increase air pollution in an area that already has illegally high levels.

Yours Sincerely,

Yours sincerely
Helen Walsh