



Institute for Public Policy Research

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# LONDON

## A JUST TRANSITION CITY

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The IPPR Environmental Justice Commission (EJC) is a landmark initiative building on IPPR's award winning work on environmental breakdown and its Commission for Economic Justice. The commission is co-chaired by Hilary Benn, Caroline Lucas and Laura Sandys, and they are joined by commissioners drawn from business, activism, academia, civil society, and trade unionism.

The central aim of the commission is to present an ambitious, positive vision shaped around people's experiences and needs, and develop a plan of action that integrates policy both to address the climate and environmental emergencies and to deliver economic and social justice.

The commission's final report will be published in 2021.  
Find out more at: <https://www.ippr.org/environment-and-justice>

## **NOTE**

This briefing is presented as a submission to the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission in order to stimulate vital public debate. The arguments and the proposals made are those of the authors only. Commissioners serve in an individual capacity, and no report of or for the Commission should be taken as representing the views of the organisations with which they are affiliated.

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IPPR, the Institute for Public Policy Research, is the UK's leading progressive think tank. We are an independent charitable organisation with our main offices in London. IPPR North, IPPR's dedicated think tank for the North of England, operates out of offices in Manchester and Newcastle, and IPPR Scotland, our dedicated think tank for Scotland, is based in Edinburgh.

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## ABOUT LONDON CITIZENS

Citizens UK is the home of community organising in the UK. London Citizens is the London-based alliance, comprising over 250 civil society organisations. We build people power alliances of diverse local communities working together for the common good. Our mission is to develop local leaders, strengthen local organisations which are the lifeblood of their communities and make change. Our member communities are deeply rooted in their local areas. Nationally, these 400+ schools, universities, churches, mosques, synagogues, parent groups, health trusts, charities and unions, are important civic institutions which connect every day to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Through the method of community organising we enable communities and local leaders to develop their voice and come together with the power and strategy to make real change.

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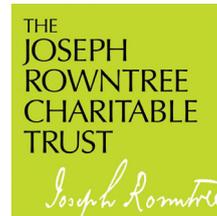
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# SUMMARY

The Covid-19 crisis has had wide reaching implications for Londoners. The crisis has amplified and exposed structural inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities and highlighted the need to 'build back better'. The pandemic has also shown that our society and economy have to be more than efficient: they must be resilient.

The crisis has also shown what a future London could look like: a city that prioritises public and active transport, with more room for people and less for cars, with cleaner air, with time and space for people to enjoy nature. The crisis has shown us that rapid change is possible, and that the government is able to act in ways many thought impossible.

This report, the result of a unique project between IPPR and London Citizens, sets out the results of an extensive listening campaign, run by London Citizens, on the priorities for the next mayor of London. It charts how action on the climate crisis could help the capital to 'build back better' but only if economic and social justice are allied to climate action. Covid-19 has highlighted and exacerbated existing injustices in our capital city. As we recover from the pandemic and seek to tackle a different crisis – the climate emergency – this report shows how climate policies must reduce emissions and address wider issues including poverty, inequality and ill-health. It also shows that the public, and poorer communities in particular, must have a stake-in and help lead the transition to a greener and fairer economy.

The report sets out the learnings and asks of the listening campaign, which connected with 706 Londoners from across a range of school, non-profits and faith institutions. Each were invited to discuss which issues mattered most to them and, crucially, where they wanted to see action by the next mayor of London.

## KEY FINDINGS

### *The interconnection between economic, social, and environmental issues*

The participants of the listening highlighted again and again the interconnected nature of economic, social, and environmental issues. For instance, health concerns were by far the most common theme, with participants talking about the health impacts of homes that were damp, mouldy, crowded and in disrepair, and about the respiratory problems they or their children had experienced living in polluted neighbourhoods.

### *Recognising all forms of injustice*

Participants often looked at the environmental challenges through multiple lenses in relation to justice. First and foremost, most participants were motivated by struggles within their own lives, or the lives of those they care about, leading to a perspective that was necessarily broader than a focus on the environment alone would allow. Participants also highlighted the possibility for climate policies to deepen existing inequalities, if this broader perspective was not kept in focus.

### *Connecting climate action with tackling wider forms of injustice*

Although climate issues increasingly command political support, the listening also revealed a great deal of ambivalence and uncertainty. Participants often expressed a sense of surprise, that 'justice' policies, such as job creation or improvements to housing could also be related to climate change.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposals in this report are designed around the objective of realising a vision for a 'just transition city'. Together, London Citizens and IPPR have defined a just transition city as:

***"A city which is taking rapid and serious steps towards achieving carbon neutrality and restoring nature, delivered through policies which maximise the opportunities of the transition, promote greater fairness and equality, and which put the needs of the poorest and most excluded first."***

Through a series of house meetings hosted by local organisations across London, followed by a policy workshop involving leaders from these same institutions working with IPPR, two priority issues were agreed.

***Goal 1: Create 60,000 good green jobs and apprenticeships (employing and training 'just transition champions') over the next mayoral term, focussing on low income and diverse communities.***

To realise this goal, London Citizens' community leaders have recommended that the next mayor:

- create a 'Just Transition Taskforce' – incorporating employers, civil society, unions, the Living Wage Foundation, and similar organisations – to create a vision for what good green jobs should entail, and potentially devise a process of certification for just transition champion roles based on this.
- develop green procurement policies for public projects, prioritising those creating just transition champion roles
- focus on those most affected by Covid-19 and on low-income communities in London
- develop a mayoral public inspiration campaign – showing how diverse, sustainable, meaningful, and potentially well-paid good green jobs can be.
- ensure jobs are accessible to those from different, diverse, and marginalised backgrounds
- create a Just Transition Champion Skills Fund – to support people into new green jobs or apprenticeships.

***Goal 2: To work towards ending fuel poverty by 2030, by upgrading 100,000 fuel poor homes over the next mayoral term, to reduce emissions, improve wellbeing, and create good green jobs.***

To realise this goal, London Citizens' community leaders have recommended that the mayor:

- directly upgrade homes to make them cheaper, healthier, and more comfortable
- encourage, incentivise, and partner with London's local authorities and housing associations to retrofit their properties
- incentivise, encourage, and, where possible, require private landlords to retrofit their properties with energy efficiency measures– helping fuel poor renters by lowering their fuel bills
- focus on the creation of good green jobs to support the upgrading of London's homes (see goal 1)
- set up local just transition funds – a way for local savers to fast-track and fund their area's retrofits
- support the creation of community-led retrofit plans – including and supporting local groups that want to retrofit their properties
- support and empower 'retrofit champions' – private companies, charities, social enterprises, and community-led initiatives that are innovating or leading the way on retrofit
- create a 'public renters forum' – where London's landlords are held to account by the mayor, tenants and wider civil society to help improve rented homes.

# 1. VISION AND FRAMEWORK

IPPR’s Environmental Justice Commission mission statement:

*“To present an ambitious, positive vision shaped around people’s experiences and needs, and develop a plan of action that integrates policy both to address the climate and environmental emergencies and to deliver economic and social justice.”*



The vision of the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission is of a vibrant, healthy society, and a clean, innovative economy, driven by the key principle of fairness. Realising this ambition will require a transformation that is both rapid and fair and that places people at its heart. It will require a fundamental change to our economic, democratic, and societal model: a programme of renewal.

Securing it will require that all policies and programmes together address the climate emergency and restore nature; improve lives and offer opportunities for all in a transformed and thriving economy – leaving no-one behind. A key element in developing policies which have fair outcomes comes from incorporating the voices and leadership of ordinary citizens, especially those often marginalised by the policymaking process. It is through this framework (shown in figure 1.1) that the commission is assessing whether individual policy proposals and policy programmes as a whole achieve our goals.

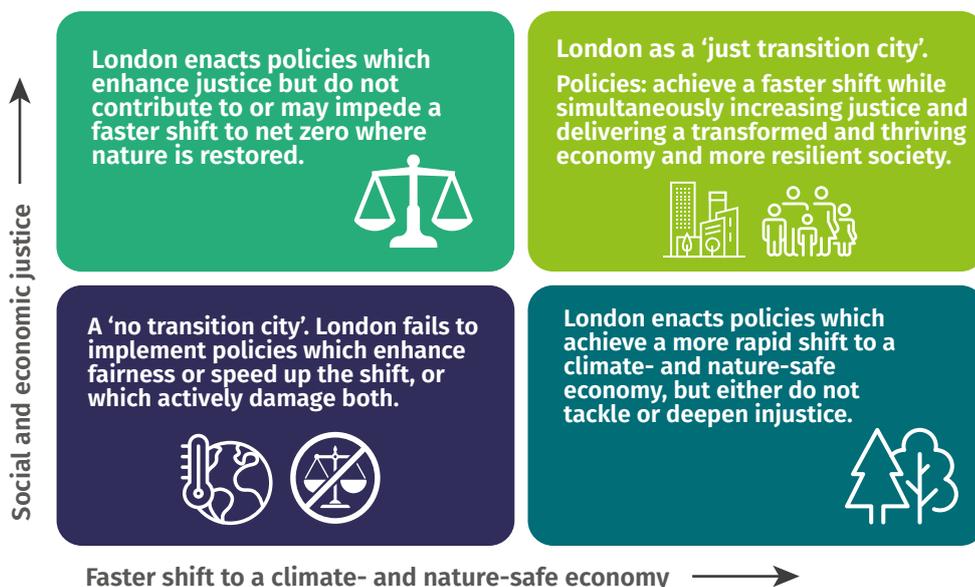
It is by using this framework that we have defined what a ‘just transition city’ could look like. A just transition city is:



*“A city which is taking rapid and serious steps towards achieving carbon neutrality and restoring nature, delivered through policies which maximise the opportunities of the transition, promote greater fairness and equality, and which put the needs of the poorest and most excluded first.”*

The proposals in this report are designed around the objective of realising this in practice, based on the extensive listening that was undertaken by London Citizens and the wider research undertaken by IPPR.

FIGURE 1.1: JUST TRANSITION FRAMEWORK



Source: Authors’ analysis

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This report draws on a listening campaign carried out by community leaders across London, supported by community organisers from London Citizens. It also draws on research conducted by IPPR as part of the work of the Environmental Justice Commission.

From the outset, the commissioners and IPPR have been committed to ensuring that the public and affected communities are put at the heart of its work and the wider transition to a climate and nature safe economy and fairer society.

The listening work conducted by London Citizens for this report is part of the wider public deliberation that has been undertaken for the commission, with four citizens juries taking place in Tees Valley and County Durham, South Wales Valleys, Thurrock, and Aberdeenshire.

### WHAT IS A LISTENING CAMPAIGN?

Community organising is a tradition of grassroots-led social change originating in the US. Many core tenets of community organising have their philosophical roots in the civic republican and Abrahamic traditions, refracted and refined through the historical experiences and struggles of minority communities, including Jews and African-Americans. Listening campaigns are a key element of the community organising toolkit.

Listening campaigns are tools for deliberation and to assess and develop policy. They are intended not only to solicit, discuss and refine ideas, but to build the capacity of participants to drive political change. This particular listening campaign relied heavily on another common tool of community organising, the house meeting.

### LONDON AS A 'JUST TRANSITION CITY' LISTENING CAMPAIGN

Between July and November 2020, 35 house meetings were hosted online, with groups ranging from between four to 22 participants. In total, 706 Londoners participated in the listening campaign, from across 20 local organisations in 15 London Boroughs.<sup>1</sup> Participating organisations included local schools, faith groups, charities, and campaign groups. Participants came from a diverse range of backgrounds, and many had not engaged with climate activism or policies before.

In each house meeting, participants discussed what the climate crisis meant to them, learned about the powers of the London mayor, and then were presented with four issue areas: 'energy', 'housing', 'jobs', and 'transport and health'.

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<sup>1</sup> The organisations involved in the listening were as follows: King's College London (Lambeth), Highgate School (Haringey), South London Refugee Association (Lambeth), The Advocacy Academy (Lambeth), Women 100 (Tower Hamlets), St Mary's Church (Waltham Forest), Caterham High School (Ilford), St. Peters Church (Harrow), St Barnabas Church (Ealing), Mums on a Mission (Barking & Dagenham), Empoderando Familias (Lambeth), Parents and Communities Together (Southwark), St Gabriel's College (Lambeth), St Martin in the Fields Church (Westminster), Reach Children's Hub (Hounslow), Creating Ground (Greenwich), Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church (Camden), Finchley Progressive Synagogue (Barnet), St John's Church Waterloo (Lambeth), and St James's Church Piccadilly (Westminster).

These issue areas were identified through pilot listening with key organisations, and input from experts, including IPPR. Each area was identified as an area of pressing everyday concern to Londoners and where there was also significant potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In the house meetings, participants were presented with a brief overview of problems surrounding sustainability and justice, and with examples of potential solutions drawn from communities across the UK.

They were then invited to discuss how each issue impacted them and the people they cared about, and what they would like to see done about it. Participants were then asked to identify what their priorities for a 'just transition' London would be, what sorts of policies they would consider 'worthwhile and winnable', and what sorts of action they would be willing to take themselves. Central to the house meetings was the act of sharing personal stories of pain and hope and, in doing so, building relationships between participants to create teams capable of acting together for change.

### **PEN PORTRAIT: SORAYA**

Soraya has a three-year-old who has allergies, asthma, and eczema and is on Asthma medication daily. He has been in and out of hospital since he was eight months old and has had three operations to help him breathe better. When she was in the hospital, she kept asking the doctors why this was happening and the doctor told her there were increasing numbers of children born with these issues but didn't know why. Living in central London, Soraya feels that she knows why: she lives in Elephant and Castle where there is so much pollution. It is congested every single day and there are recurring road works, which bring the whole traffic to a standstill. Cars and buses keep their engines on which exacerbate pollution levels.



Each house meeting chose their top two issue areas, highlighting their favoured solutions within these and sharing personal stories. On 3 December 2020, representatives of all these organisations met to review the findings of the listening campaign, and to use these to identify and agree upon their policy priorities for the 2021 London mayoral election.

### **REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report documents the findings of the listening campaign, and additional policy and political context provided by IPPR, and the main asks that arose from the listening campaign.

### 3.

# CONTEXT

The climate crisis is increasingly a lived reality for many communities across the country – urban and rural. Some are affected by regular and uncontrollable flooding, while others suffer the dire health impacts of air pollution (IPPR 2020). More often than not, the burden of these negative consequences fall on those on the lowest incomes and those least responsible (IPPR 2020).

In reality, communities face a range of impacts resulting from the climate crisis and face the need to transition:

- to address the direct environmental impacts as well as indirect political, economic, and social impacts of the climate crisis
- to address the impacts that will arise from the economic transition in response to the climate crisis
- to deliver the changes required in neighbourhoods and lifestyles to meet these challenges.

Despite these immense challenges, there is hope. It is within our ability to redesign our society, ensuring the impacts of the climate crisis are limited, and, where that is not possible, adapted to – while at the same time making the world a better and fairer place. There are immense benefits to be realised if these transitions are well managed, including improvements in health, inequality, and quality of life (IPPR 2020).

This will need action to upgrade our homes, change how our energy is produced, reshape our transport systems, and reimagine how we produce food and develop our green industries.

However, to achieve this in a way that addresses inequality and maximises the opportunities of the transition will require a new approach. To date, much of the progress made in addressing the climate crisis has occurred in the background, led by national policy change, through shifts in the energy sector – practically invisible to most of the public and consumers. But the changes required now will affect people’s everyday lives and communities up and down the country (and across the world).

#### LONDON’S TRANSITION

London has the lowest territorial carbon emissions per person compared to any other English region, “due to the urban nature of the transport system, a high population density and lower level of large industrial facilities” (BEIS 2020). Nevertheless, there is much more to be done, not least if the capital is to meet the net zero 2030 ambition committed to by the current mayor for a potential future mayoral term.

In London, recent figures indicate that a little over one-third (37 per cent) of territorial emissions are from Londoner’s homes, another one-third (36 per cent) of emissions come from industrial and commercial actors, and most of the rest (26 per cent) of emissions are from transport – predominantly road and aviation (GLA 2019). This shows that action in areas that affect Londoner’s everyday lives – their

homes, how they get to work, their busy neighbourhood streets, their work – is required to address the climate crisis.

London also imports goods and services from other parts of the UK and internationally. These products also result in greenhouse gas emissions. To truly tackle the climate crisis, London will need to target its ‘consumption emissions’, which include these imports, and which recent research suggests could be 60 per cent higher than territorial emissions (C40 2018).

London is also home to a number of institutions with global influence, in particular linked to the City of London, a global financial hub. By targeting these institutions, climate action can leverage international impacts. Such targeting of global institutions can seem remote from community-orientated climate action, but there may be opportunities to shape change that influences the local and global simultaneously.

Moreover, as a city with relatively large capacity as well as historical responsibility for emissions, London must lead the way, by reaching carbon neutrality before much of the world, and taking an internationalist approach to action.

### **COVID-19 AND THE RECOVERY**

The Covid-19 crisis has had wide reaching implications for Londoners. The crisis has amplified and exposed structural inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities and highlighting the need for urgent corrective action (GLA 2020a). It has also shown – for example, through mutual aid groups – how important strong, organised communities are to our ability to weather crises (Webb et al forthcoming).

As temporary government support such as the coronavirus job retention scheme is wound down, there are concerns that unemployment could rise across the UK to more than 2.6 million in 2021 (King 2020). In London alone, the number of people claiming universal credit has more than doubled to nearly 1 million since the start of the pandemic (GLA 2020a).

As London emerges from this crisis, urgent action will be required to halt and reverse rising unemployment. It’s equally critical that the new jobs created are of better quality than those lost. For some time, it has been apparent that our economy needs to be reshaped to improve living standards for all, with a focus on those on the lowest incomes (CEJ 2018).

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that our society and economy have to be more than efficient: they must be resilient (Laybourn-Langton et al 2019). The pandemic has also seen a marked acceleration of previously apparent trends – the demise of high streets, increased working from home and flexible working (for some but not all), and the growing, dominant market power of Big Tech companies. The disruption these trends will cause – as with the transition to a climate neutral economy – requires active management from London’s and the UK’s leaders.

The crisis has also shown what a future London could look like: a city that prioritises public and active transport, with more room for people and less for cars, with cleaner air, and with time and space for people to enjoy nature. The crisis has also shown us that rapid change is possible, and that the government is able to act in ways many thought impossible.

There is an opportunity for the crisis to mark a turning point; one where disadvantaged communities are prioritised, community capacity is enhanced, and action on the climate crisis is accelerated. This would require a transformative approach to the recovery – aiming to build back better, and refusing to return to the status quo. The current mayor

has set out a plan and a series of missions for London's recovery after Covid-19. One of the missions is the 'Green New Deal' mission which seeks to ally action on the climate and ecological emergencies with the improvement of health and the creation of job opportunities. We urge the current mayor to adopt the thinking and conclusions outlined in this report within that mission and for the next London mayor, elected later this year, to do the same.

#### **PEN PORTRAIT: KAYE**

**Kaye** has worked in low-income jobs all his life. He is aware of the impact this has on all areas of his life – esteem, housing, and future opportunities. He thinks things will only get worse as we come out of the pandemic. He says there is a pressing need for new solutions.



## 4.

# CHALLENGES AND CURRENT POLICIES

### THE CHALLENGES

The pledge by the current mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, that the capital will be carbon neutral by 2030 if he is re-elected is very welcome, but it is also very ambitious (Procter 2020). There are several challenges that will need to be overcome if whoever is elected in the mayoral elections in May 2021 commits to achieving this goal.

#### *Challenge 1: Investment*

The scale of investment required to decarbonise London's buildings and infrastructure in the next 10 years is estimated at between £4.8 billion and £6.1 billion per year.<sup>2</sup> To put this into context, the planned total budget over which the mayor will have discretionary control for the current year is (2020/21) £4.4 billion (GLA 2020b). This is a substantial sum, and an £800 million increase from the previous year, but it is being spent on several priorities rather than decarbonisation alone. The investment required to deliver decarbonisation does not need to be borne by the Greater London Authority (GLA) alone, even if it were to raise the budget – but the degree of investment at the GLA's disposal does need to be addressed. Nevertheless, it is also important to note that the costs of inaction on the climate crisis are far greater (IPPR 2020) and there are a multitude of opportunities and benefits to fair and rapid action (ibid).

#### *Challenge 2: Powers and resources of the mayor*

London has fewer devolved powers than many other major international cities and fewer than other devolved nations in the UK (LFC 2017). For example, London does not have the same fiscal powers as Scotland to adjust either general taxation or other taxes such as council tax and business rates (LFC 2017). If the UK is to show global leadership, it must empower cities like London to deliver on their ambitious climate commitments. This should include the devolution of certain fiscal powers along with other levies and taxes. With these powers and additional resources in place, London will be able to make faster progress towards its goals.

#### *Challenge 3: Skills and capacity*

The estimated investment needed for the decarbonisation of buildings and infrastructure does not account for the substantial increase in capacity that will be required to deliver this. This includes both the staffing and levels of understanding among government institutions such as local authorities whose job it will be to plan for and procure technologies. These pressures come at a time when local council budgets are being slashed (NAO 2018). There is also a need to rapidly upskill workers within industry to deliver across many of the sectors, where many relevant employers are reporting skills shortages. However, with the right mechanisms in place, this represents a huge job growth opportunity – for example, in retrofitting housing, and installing renewable energy and heating systems (Jung and Murphy 2020).

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<sup>2</sup> Condensed figures from 2050 cost estimates in GLA 2018.

**TABLE 4.1: A SELECTION OF LONDON'S EXISTING CLIMATE AND NATURE POLICIES**

Sector	Policy	Description
<b>Overarching missions</b>	A Green New Deal	As part of London's recovery from Covid-19, the current mayor has set out a series of missions. This includes a 'Green New Deal' mission to "Tackle the climate and ecological emergencies and improve air quality by doubling the size of London's green economy by 2030 to accelerate job creation for all." <sup>3</sup>
<b>Housing</b>	Warmer Homes	£10m over four years to upgrade efficiency of up to 1,000 fuel poor homes <sup>4</sup> as well as a Warmer Homes Advice Service <sup>5</sup> to provide support for applications and other bills. The Fuel Poverty Partnership <sup>6</sup> also brings together key stakeholders.
	Retrofit Accelerator	Delivering whole-house retrofits to 1,678 homes in Greater London over the next three years. <sup>7</sup>
	Energy Leap	Trialling the feasibility of retrofitting homes to a net zero standard. <sup>8</sup>
	London Power	Energy company in partnership with Octopus Energy offering all Londoners low-cost energy tariffs. <sup>9</sup>
<b>Non-domestic buildings</b>	Mayor of London Energy Efficiency Fund (MEEF)	£500m for energy efficiency upgrades in partnership with Amber Infrastructure Group and the European Regional Development Fund. <sup>10</sup>
	RE:FIT London	Funded by ERDF, it helps to provide free support to public sector organisations to help them deploy energy efficiency retrofit projects. <sup>11</sup>
	Cleaner heat cashback	Partnership with Energy Saving Trust and Kiwa to provide 30 to 40 per cent cashback for SMEs replaying old heating systems with new, cleaner ones. <sup>12</sup>
<b>Transport</b>	Ultra-low emission zones (ULEZ)	Zone around central London that charge vehicles that do not meet ULEZ emissions standards with plans to expand to the North and South Circular from 25th October 2021. <sup>13</sup>
	Cleaner buses	£300m committed as part of an ambition to convert all buses to be zero carbon by 2037 and 12 low emission bus zones. <sup>14</sup>
	Car Scrappage Scheme	£48m to support smaller business owners, sold traders, charities and low-income earners to scrap old motorcycles, mopeds and cars. <sup>15</sup>
	Electric vehicle charging points	£4.5m funding allocated to work with councils to deploy rapid charge and slower charging points. The EV Infrastructure Taskforce also brings together key stakeholders. <sup>16</sup>

3 <https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/londons-recovery-coronavirus-crisis/recovery-context/green-new-deal#acc-i-61478>

4 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/improving-quality/warmer-homes>

5 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/energy/warmer-homes-advice-servic>

6 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/energy/london-fuel-poverty-partnership>

7 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/energy/retrofit-accelerator-homes>

8 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/energy/energy-buildings/energy-leap-project-pilots>

9 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/london-power>

10 <https://www.amberinfrastructure.com/media/2170/meef-fact-sheet.pdf>

11 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/energy/energy-buildings/retrofit-accelerator-workplaces/refit-london-services>

12 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/business-and-economy/cleaner-heat-cashback>

13 <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone>

14 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/pollution-and-air-quality/cleaner-buses>

15 <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/car-and-motorcycle-scrappage-scheme>

16 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/pollution-and-air-quality/electric-vehicle-infrastructure>

Skills	Low emission neighbourhoods (LENs)	The mayor has supported several low emission neighbourhoods across the capital. <sup>17</sup>
	Mayor's Construction Academy	Academy set up by the mayor to address skills shortages in the construction industry. <sup>18</sup>
	Skills and Employment Knowledge Hub	A skills hub being introduced to match improve information and data on skills needs of employers in London. <sup>19</sup>
	Young Londoners Fund	A £45m programme to support local community projects and provide activities for young Londoners. <sup>20</sup>
Nature	Greener City Fund	A £12m fund to drive the commitment to make a national park city with over half the city's area being green by 2050. <sup>21</sup>
	Air Quality Fund	£22m over 10 years to support projects to improve air quality. <sup>22</sup>
Finance	Divestment	GLA cash assets have been divested from fossil fuels <sup>23</sup> and the mayor has also called on London Boroughs to also divest their pension funds. <sup>24</sup>

Source: Authors' analysis

#### Challenge 4: Ensuring the transition is just

Lastly, as this report makes clear, ambitious climate policies must also focus on social and economic justice. IPPR's Environmental Justice Commission has shown that the poorest at home and abroad are both the least responsible for the climate crisis, but are at most risk of its impacts (from air pollution and flooding for example) (IPPR 2020). Consequently, all policies must ensure that the poorest do not pay disproportionately (or at all) for a problem for which they are least responsible. This challenge is particularly acute for London which faces the highest rates of income equality in the country as well as the highest rates of poverty (Raikes 2020). Some measures to reduce carbon emissions contain inbuilt benefits for social inequality – for example, reducing emissions from petrol and diesel vehicles will also reduce air pollution, which is a major health risk for low-income groups, and improving housing quality with retrofit and renewable heating could address poor quality, damp, draughty homes that causes poor health (IPPR 2020). The impact of climate policies on inequality will depend on the choices and priorities of policymakers. The transition presents an opportunity to link these two important agendas.

#### CURRENT POLICIES: WHAT'S ALREADY BEING DONE?

The current mayor has already taken important steps in reducing emissions. Having set out the London Environment Strategy (GLA 2018b) and the 1.5C Compatible Plan (GLA 2018a), many funds and programmes have now been put into place to further London's decarbonisation efforts (a selection of key programmes can be seen table 4.1).

Although the funds and programmes are both relatively small-scale compared to what is required and originally set up with a 2050 target in mind, they are crucial in helping to develop the organisational infrastructure required to implement more rapid decarbonisation goals. Many of these schemes can be the building blocks on which more ambitious policies are based.

17 <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/boroughs-and-communities/low-emission-neighbourhoods>

18 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/skills-and-employment/skills-londoners/mayors-construction-academy/about>

19 [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sfl\\_framework\\_final.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sfl_framework_final.pdf)

20 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/education-and-youth/young-londoners/mayors-young-londoners-fund>

21 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/parks-green-spaces-and-biodiversity/greener-city-fund>

22 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/pollution-and-air-quality/mayors-air-quality-fund>

23 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/climate-change/zero-carbon-london/divestment-and-green-investment>

24 <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-calls-for-boroughs-to-divest-pension-funds>

## 5. FINDINGS FROM THE LISTENING CAMPAIGN

### THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The discussions on the climate crisis in London revealed a complex picture. Crucially, most groups highlighted the interconnected nature of these issues, with many noting that this made prioritising specific issues a necessarily imperfect exercise. For instance, health concerns were by far the most common theme, with participants talking about the health impacts of homes that were damp, mouldy, crowded and in disrepair; about the respiratory problems they or their children had experienced living in polluted neighbourhoods; and about the profound costs to both physical and mental health coming from poverty and joblessness.

Improving mental and physical health was a frequent reason for supporting a green jobs programme



In addition, particular issues were sometimes prioritised precisely because they were seen as addressing others as well. Addressing unemployment, economic precarity, and access to opportunity were common reasons given for groups championing housing retrofit and transport improvements, just as improving mental and physical health was a frequent reason for supporting a green jobs programme.

### RECOGNISING ALL FORMS OF INJUSTICE

Participants often looked at the environmental challenges through multiple lenses in relation to justice. First and foremost, most participants were motivated by struggles within their own lives, or the lives of those they care about, leading to a perspective that was necessarily broader than a focus on the environment alone would allow. For instance, stories around homes often highlighted poor insulation, mould, or unaffordable heating bills alongside issues surrounding overcrowding, unscrupulous landlords, systematic neglect by local councils, high prices and constrained choice – as interconnected components of a larger problem.

#### PEN PORTRAIT: YEWANDE

**Yewande**, after many years of not having any legal status in the UK, finally got her Definitive Leave to Remain. She has been looking for jobs but hasn't been able to find any and now with the pandemic she fears that she won't, especially because she's been out of employment for such a long time. She believes green jobs are only given to highly educated, middle-class (and mostly white) people. She would love it if they had schemes that would enable people like her to be part of this emerging industry.



Participants also highlighted the possibility for climate policies to deepen existing inequalities, if this broader perspective was not kept in focus. Groups expressed resistance to policies such as vehicle emissions regulations or housing retrofit if, for instance, they impacted working-class livelihoods or priced people out of their neighbourhoods. Participants also supported some solutions in part because of their potential to improve economic or social justice.

For young people in particular, green jobs were seen as a potential way of navigating the tensions some felt between personal financial security and social responsibility within a capitalist economy, and of cultivating a new understanding of work and value with responsibility at its heart. Similarly, housing retrofits were seen as potential tools for reducing the sense of exploitation and powerlessness people felt when it came to their homes. After health, anxieties for the future – for oneself and for one’s children – was the next most prevalent theme within the stories shared, and groups were often attracted to policies which were most able to speak credibly to such anxieties.

### CONNECTING CLIMATE ACTION WITH TACKLING WIDER FORMS OF INJUSTICE

Although today climate issues command increasing political support, our listening also revealed a great deal of ambivalence and uncertainty. Many participants suggested that while they recognised the crisis was urgent and important, they did not understand it well, or else viewed it as an elite issue.

Participants often expressed a sense of surprise that ‘justice’ policies – such as job creation or improvements to housing – could also be related to climate change. Others – particularly people from marginalised communities – expressed scepticism that solutions, such as green jobs, would benefit them, based on an understanding that climate change and its solutions mostly concerned the ‘elite’.

Participants also talked about wanting solutions that were collectivist rather than individualist, and which were designed and communicated in ways inclusive to people of different backgrounds. Global justice was also important, with several participants relating to climate change through the lens of their own international relationships and connections. In other words, to grow and diversify political support for sustainability policies, a credible, justice-first approach seems to be needed.

Inequality, exploitation, and powerlessness were also key themes. In relation to housing, for example, participants linked the myriad issues raised to a perspective where housing and housing policies were viewed first and foremost in financial terms, as a commodity, investment or public expense, rather than in relation to people’s needs and wellbeing.

people from marginalised communities expressed scepticism that solutions such as green jobs would benefit them



#### PEN PORTRAIT: JOSH

**Josh** is in his early 20s, and as a renter, he says he is powerless in his choices within his home. He would like to do more to live in an energy efficient home but says that all the power is with his landlord.



**Breathing cleaner air during the lockdowns helped participants get excited about the transformative potential of climate policies**



Health issues often created a sense of helplessness and deep-seated frustration. The perceived complexity of climate change as an issue, and the dominance of middle-class voices and technical language, were likewise seen in relation to power, with only those who are more affluent having the capacity to act.

However, the realisation that action was possible, and that it could relate to everyday experiences and interests, motivated a number of participants to want to learn and do more.

Experiences of biking on emptier roads or breathing cleaner air during the lockdowns or being part of energy-switching campaigns or community energy projects helped participants recognise and get excited about the transformative potential of climate policies.

In the next chapter, the asks agreed on through the listening campaign are considered in more detail in terms of how they can be delivered in practice within a 'just transition city'.

# ASKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While the target of achieving net zero by 2030 is an important ambition, we recognise that the mayor does not currently have all the powers and resources necessary to deliver it. To realise the 2030 goal and the vision of a just transition city, we believe that the next mayor should focus their attention in the following ways.

- The next mayor should focus their limited resources and powers on reducing emissions and delivering social improvements at the same time. This could include, for example, focussing on reducing fuel poverty as part of reducing carbon emissions from housing.
- The next mayor should use their convening power with London's boroughs, businesses, civil society, and trade unions to maximise the impact of any policy interventions.
- The next mayor should seek the necessary resources and powers from central government to allow London to meet a 2030 net zero target and fully realise the vision of a just transition city.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT WAS CENTRED AROUND KEY MESSAGES FROM THE LISTENING

In particular, the need for:

- action to prioritise and relate to marginalised communities' experiences, needs, and wants – economic and social justice must be allied with climate action
- enhancing the power and resilience of communities by decentralising decision-making powers and ownership and promoting community wealth building
- holistic solutions that connect multiple sectors
- action that raises hope for the future, particularly for young people.

For the priority areas set out below, we have shaped asks for the mayor that bring in wider parties – via the mayor's convening role – to realise meaningful change. We have considered overarching goals and policy asks to get there. These are intended to be an initial framework, to be taken forward by London Citizens and the communities it works with, in conjunction with the mayor.

Crucially, we have developed our asks by incorporating core principles of organising: winnable issues with tangible outcomes which meet the needs of communities. These mayoral campaign areas need to act as a springboard to both local action and future campaigns – altering power relations, building knowledge and growing capacity for action.

## THE PRIORITY AREAS

Through a series of house meetings, hosted by local organisations across London, followed by a policy workshop involving leaders from these same institutions and working with IPPR, two priority issues were agreed.

1. Create 60,000 good green jobs and apprenticeships (employing and training just transition champions) over the next mayoral term, focussing on low income and diverse communities.

2. Work towards ending fuel poverty by 2030 by upgrading 100,000 fuel poor homes over the next mayoral term, to reduce emissions, improve wellbeing and create good green jobs.<sup>25</sup>

The listening campaign highlighted that homes and jobs were priority areas for joint action on inequality and climate change, having been identified as worthwhile areas with winnable goals. Health and transport – linked by air pollution, accessibility, and exercise – were also identified as significant priorities.

### PRIORITY AREA ONE: JOBS

As we have already highlighted, there are concerns that unemployment could rise across the UK to more than 2.6 million in 2021 (King 2020). In the capital, universal credit claimants have more than doubled to nearly 1 million since the start of the pandemic (GLA 2020a).

The effects of this crisis are compounding those of an already precarious, low-wage and unfulfilling employment landscape. The Health Foundation suggests as many as 36 per cent of workers – around 10 million people – were employed in such conditions prior to the current crisis (Partington 2020). The issue of low-quality work is partly driven by, but also extends beyond, the gig economy and proliferation of zero hours contracts.

#### PEN PORTRAIT: DARREN

**Darren** is in his mid-20s and is worried about what the future holds. “In 20-years I’m still likely going to be working class,” he says “but I’m going to be even more stretched for money than I am now.”



Young people, following at least a year of huge disruption to their education, social lives and in many cases health, face a hugely challenging jobs market. This prospect is of course having profound impacts on people’s mental health. Anxieties about the future and a sense of hopelessness are compounded, not only by our public health and economic crises – but also by the climate crisis.

#### *Our goal for jobs*

To address the above challenges, we are recommending that the mayor work with civil society, business, and the public sector to create 60,000<sup>26</sup> good green jobs and apprenticeships (employing and training just transition champions) over the next mayoral term, focussing on low income and diverse communities.

<sup>25</sup> The process of identifying these priorities began with the house meetings. At each house meeting, participants voted on their top two issue areas, discussing why these mattered, and their preferred policy solutions within them. The discussion looked not only at which issues were prioritised, but at why priorities were selected, how the opportunities and challenges of a just transition were understood, what would be achievable and impactful, and what it was about certain issues that moved people to action. Based on this, representatives decided on housing and jobs as priority issues, recognising that while transport was a marginally more popular issue than jobs, a green jobs programme had greater potential to incorporate a wider range of concerns – potentially including those around transport – and had the potential for greater impact, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

<sup>26</sup> Here we are adopting the UK Government’s current definition of those jobs in the low-carbon and renewable energy economy as consisting of the following industry sectors: low-carbon electricity, low-carbon heat; alternative fuels; energy efficient products; low-carbon services and low-emission vehicles and infrastructure.

### **What change is required?**

Efforts by the mayor are required to focus action on creating new green jobs that address both the jobs and climate crises. It is paramount that these jobs do not only contribute to addressing the economic challenges facing households but give a sense of contribution and hope to those anxious about climate action and our future.

There is a need to ensure that the skills and career experiences of Londoners are able to support them as they move into a changing future, and to ensure that the poorest are not only not further left behind but are supported to get ahead.

This requires action targeted at both employers and potential employees. For employees, effort is needed to develop skills as well as awareness of benefits that sustainable, decently paid green jobs can bring. For employers, action is required to ensure that jobs are of a high quality. The mayor can also act to stimulate activity that will lead to green job creation, including through home retrofits, making them more energy efficient, as per our first ask – but also in the broad range of sectors requiring investment to accelerate the shift to zero carbon.

Infrastructure and building projects – both public and private – often cite job creation as a key area in which they add economic value. There is an opportunity for the mayor to set an aspirational standard for such jobs to be good quality and promote their benefits widely.

#### **PEN PORTRAIT: DEBORAH**

**Deborah** is a practitioner in mental health nursing and is interested in the mental health benefits of green jobs. She says she sees many young people as clients who get very anxious and depressed about the climate and Covid-19 crisis. She told us that if they knew there was something they could actually do then this would help their mental health significantly.



### **Achieving our goal**

To realise our goal, London Citizens' community leaders have recommended that the mayor:

- create a 'just transition taskforce' – incorporating employers, civil society, unions, the Living Wage Foundation and similar organisations – to create a vision for what good green jobs should entail, and potentially devise a process of certification for Just Transition Champion roles based on this
- develop green procurement policies for public projects, prioritising those creating just transition champion roles
- focus on those most affected by Covid-19 and low-income communities in London
- develop a mayoral public inspiration campaign – showing how diverse, sustainable, meaningful, and potentially well-paid good green jobs can be
- ensure jobs are accessible to those from diverse, and marginalised backgrounds
- create a Just Transition Champion Skills Fund to support people into new green jobs or apprenticeships.

These asks were collectively shaped with London Citizens' community leaders at a policy workshop. They respond to the key messages that emerged at the session, a sample of which are shown below.



We acknowledge that a broad range of jobs will be fundamental to a low-carbon and just society – from care work to teachers and beyond. For our asks and our 60,000 short-term target, we propose a focus on jobs that are directly essential to meeting decarbonisation targets; for example, those involved in undertaking housing retrofit, developing renewable energy, or extending low carbon transport.<sup>27</sup> This is to prevent 'greenwashing' – the use of otherwise created jobs as part of the target. However, this does not diminish the need for the creation of a broad range of new roles for our future society.

### PRIORITY AREA TWO: HOMES

Homes are a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions (responsible 37 per cent of all CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in London) (GLA 2018a), and – through the costs of rent or mortgage payments, poor quality, and tenancy insecurity – are likewise a significant contributor to inequality (Murphy and Baxter 2017).

As evidenced by multiple recent policy failures linked to retrofit, housing is a challenging area in which to realise change, for the following reasons.

<sup>27</sup> The UK government currently defines the low-carbon and renewable energy economy as consisting of the following industry sectors: low-carbon electricity, low-carbon heat; alternative fuels; energy efficient products; low-carbon services and low-emission vehicles and infrastructure.

1. **There is no one-size-fits-all solution.** All homes are different, as are their occupants and the local participants involved in making change happen. Innovative funding and delivery models are required to bring the diverse stakeholders together and align their interests (Webb et al 2020).
2. **Quality is key** – a poorly delivered retrofit can make health and wellbeing outcomes worse, even if carbon emissions are reduced. Our listening suggested that perceptions of these risks has created a barrier to change. This also links with broader safety concerns following the Grenfell tragedy.
3. **Many retrofit schemes to date have focussed on individuals** – often homeowners - as the agents of change, assuming they will make long-term decisions based on monetary incentives. In reality, housing can be recognised as an asset with cultural, social and political drivers. Change therefore requires a holistic approach bringing together a wide range of stakeholders and the full supply chain (ibid).
4. **Housing retrofit requires significant capital investment**, but has the potential for large benefits that outweigh the costs. The public sector is unlikely to be able to bear the upfront costs in their entirety. There is therefore a need to aggregate schemes at scale to attract private investment (ibid).

These barriers should act as an incentive for a new approach; one that centres action on inequality, communities, and transformational climate action. As discussed above, the mayor of London has undertaken a range of initiatives related to the upgrade of homes that can act as a foundation for ambitious new action.

#### PEN PORTRAIT: MOTUNRAYO

**Motunrayo** told us about the damp and mould in her own housing, and the housing of her relatives. She doesn't have a radiator or window in her bedroom so she has no way of drying it out. She thinks she's lucky though, because some of her family members have ended up in hospital because of the damp and cold of their homes. She believes the council isn't held responsible and hadn't imagined there was an actual solution.



#### Our goal for homes

To address the above challenges, we are recommending that the mayor work with civil society, business, and the public sector to **work towards ending fuel poverty by 2030, by upgrading 100,000 homes over the next mayoral term to reduce emissions, improve wellbeing, and create good green jobs.**

#### What change is required?

Broadly, our aims in this area relate to upgrading of existing housing (retrofitting). This:

- improves health and wellbeing
- reduces costs for tenants
- improves energy security
- reduces carbon emissions
- creates good new jobs (linking to focus area one).

### **PEN PORTRAIT: MARY**

**Mary** is a local GP. She told us that she sees many patients with recurrent illnesses linked to poor-quality housing. She sees how this impacts not only physical health but mental health as well, making life even harder for those who are on low incomes.



### ***Achieving our goal***

To realise our goal, London Citizens' community leaders have recommended that the mayor:

- directly upgrade homes to make them cheaper, healthier, and more comfortable
- encourage, incentivise, and partner with London's local authorities and housing associations to retrofit their properties
- incentivise and encourage and, where possible, require private landlords to retrofit their properties with energy efficiency measures– helping fuel poor renters by lowering their fuel bills.
- employ 'just transition champions' (see goal one)
- set up 'local just transition funds' – a way for local savers to fast-track and fund their area's retrofits
- support the creation of community-led retrofit plans – including and supporting local groups that want to retrofit their properties
- support and empower 'retrofit champions' – private companies, charities, and social enterprises and community-led initiatives that are innovating or leading the way on retrofit
- create a 'Public Renters Forum' – where London's landlords are held to account by the mayor, tenants, and wider civil society to help improve rented homes.

These asks were collectively shaped with London Citizens' community leaders at a policy workshop. They respond to the key messages that emerged at the session, some examples of which are shown below.

<p>Retrofitting homes is really key, it influences health, poverty and carbon all together.</p>	<p>Fuel poverty is a huge problem in London.</p>	<p>A renters' forum is really needed.</p>	<p>Success and a good standard of living in London needs to be open to everyone, not just well-off people, and housing is key.</p>
<p>How will it be decided which homes will receive retrofitting?</p>	<p>We should prioritise the poorest and make sure this is accessible, fair, not disruptive, not costly and so on.</p>	<p>It could radically improve quality of life and create jobs.</p>	<p>Like the idea of retrofitting and links into jobs, it could also link to better energy deals.</p>
<p>Communities should feel in control, and ideally not like this is being imposed from above.</p>	<p>We need to deal with distrust surrounding management of council housing.</p>	<p>We should focus on retrofits for quality of life.</p>	<p>The link with green jobs is a good measure.</p>
<p>Examples with council housing should be used to demonstrate success and encourage private companies and other actors to follow, via the mayor's convening role.</p>	<p>Shaping community-led retrofit – take back control for communities and empower retrofit champions.</p>		

# CONCLUSION

This report, the result of a unique partnership between IPPR and London Citizens, draws on the findings of a listening campaign that gave time and a platform to communities who are rarely involved in the conversation on the climate crisis. The insights it provides should serve as an encouragement to policymakers that action on the climate crisis can be popular, provided it also helps to address the everyday needs of citizens. But it also serves as a warning that the failure to combine climate action with economic and social justice risks putting a successful transition at risk.

The report outlines what IPPR and London Citizens have defined as a 'just transition city' and some priority asks for the next mayor of London to take forward. The report has not sought to set out the full range of policy actions to realise a just transition city. Instead, we hope others will build on this work, through similar listening and deliberative exercises, to build a policy platform that can deliver on the vision set out by the hundreds of Londoners that participated in the creation of this report.

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