London Mayoral Election 2024

The London Mayoral election will be held on 2nd May 2024. Despite the amount of progress made on cleaning up London's air over the last few years, we need London's next Mayor to go much further if we want children to be truly protected from the lifelong health impacts of air pollution.

We have formed a coalition of campaign groups from across London to call on the Mayoral candidates **to commit to strong action to tackle air pollution** once elected.

We are delighted to join together with Bloomsbury Air, Bromley Living Streets, Clean Air Dulwich, Clear the Air Havering, Greener and Cleaner, Green School Runs, Havering Climate Coalition, Haringey Clean Air Group, Islington Clean Air Parents, Lambeth Living Streets, NOcado and Richmond & Twickenham Friends of the Earth to campaign for a #Mayor4CleanAir.

Our coalition is asking the four main London Mayoral candidates for:

1. An unequivocal commitment for London to **meet the latest World Health Organization air pollution guidelines**.

   This needs a roadmap, including financial support where required, to meet interim targets by 2030 at the latest which will include the need to:
   Phase out diesel engines by 2030 (except for specific exemptions).
   Phase out wood burning in open fires and wood stoves by 2030.

2. Mayoral leadership on an effective London-wide strategy to roll out **School Superzones**.

3. A **state-of-the-art website** for Londoners to access all air quality monitoring in one place, alongside the latest health evidence, modelling projections and reports.

Our three asks in detail:

1. A commitment for London to meet the latest World Health Organization (WHO) air pollution guidelines.

In 2017, the Mayor of London committed to the Breathe Life campaign and thereby pledged to reduce fine particulate matter (PM2.5) to the now-outdated WHO recommendation of 10ug/m3 PM2.5 as an annual mean across the city.

In 2021 the WHO updated its recommendations for air quality based on strong evidence that air pollution is harmful to health at significantly lower levels than previously understood. Accordingly, the recommended annual mean of air quality levels should not exceed 5ug/m3 PM2.5 and 10ug/m3 nitrogen dioxide (NO2). London is a long way away from this at the moment.

In the shorter term, the next Mayor should commit to providing the pathway and action to at least achieving the interim targets of 10ug/m3 PM2.5 and 20ug/m3 NO2 by 2030 at the latest, whilst also outlining how and when the updated WHO recommended guideline levels will be fully delivered. Different EU bodies are proposing the same levels to be achieved by the EU Member States by 2030.

These air quality targets are necessary to reduce the many and costly health impacts that hundreds of thousands of Londoners are experiencing regularly. This commitment will realistically require London to become 'diesel-free' and wood burning to be phased out.

1. Diesel vehicles are still the single biggest contributor to NO2 levels across the city. NO2 is known to inflame the lungs and exacerbate lung conditions. Diesel vehicles must be phased out urgently across the city and the next Mayor needs to start work on this as soon as possible to ensure that current and potential vehicle owners do not continue to buy diesel vehicles. Even (ULEZ-exempt) diesel Euro VI vehicles are emitting disproportionately and, in many cases, illegal levels of NO2 pollution.

2. Wood burning is a major contributor to toxic particle pollution in London, which is already heavily polluted. It should be phased out from all households with access to cleaner heating sources. The next Mayor should call publicly on individuals to switch to alternative heating methods and work with the government to obtain the necessary authority to do so.

2. Mayoral leadership on an effective London-wide strategy to roll out School Superzones.

In 2021, the Mayor of London was leading the development of schemes called School Superzones. These are zones around schools where actions are taken to create healthier places for children, young people and their families to live, learn and play. The next Mayor should continue this work and expand leadership around protecting children's health on their way to and at school, especially those located on main roads, which are usually the most polluted roads.
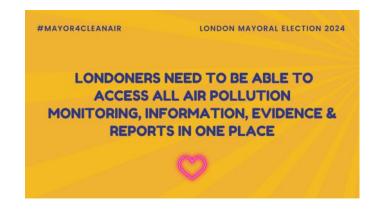
Currently, many local authorities are implementing School Street schemes, which benefit many children across the city. However, children's health should not depend on the willingness of their respective local authority to deliver such schemes. Moreover, School Streets only protect against traffic pollution. As the plans for the Ocado depot in Islington or the proposals to build a recycling plant at the back of a school in Lambeth highlight, children on their way to and in school require protection from more air pollution sources than just traffic. Therefore, the next Mayor should lead the development and delivery of School Superzones to ensure more equal protection for all of London's children.

3. A state-of-the-art website for Londoners to access all air quality monitoring in one place.

In London, there are approximately 1000-1500 stations that monitor air pollution. These stations include the London Air Quality Network, local authority diffusion tubes, Breathe London monitors, and other monitors from commercial suppliers. Despite this wealth of data, both campaigners and policymakers are struggling to easily and transparently assess whether air pollution is decreasing, or whether individual measures like road works are having any impact. The LondonAir website stores a lot of data, but it is too complex to use effectively.

We strongly urge the next Mayor to provide a single website that collates all available data, information and evidence, including modelling for 2025 and 2030. This will allow Londoners to gain real insight into the quality of the air they breathe, increase accountability and transparency, and enable local campaigners and residents to see if interventions and schemes are having any impact.

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