

# A More Natural Capital

An agenda for the  
London local elections



## **Call to action:**

Please commit to A More Natural Capital  
on 5th May 2022... and beyond

# “We all want a cleaner, greener London – help us deliver it now!”

The London Borough Council elections on 5th May 2022\* are a great opportunity for candidates standing for election to make a commitment to deliver a More Natural Capital for all who live, work and play in London.

From the threat posed to the city by climate change, to the depletion of our natural world, and the growing inequalities in health and wellbeing revealed by the pandemic, Londoners need local leaders who are up to the challenge of delivering a better future for people and nature.

**Our agenda enjoys widespread public support.** More than three quarters of Londoners<sup>1</sup> think tackling air pollution should be a priority; 8 out of 10 Londoners are concerned about climate change;<sup>2</sup> and nationally more than half of people<sup>3</sup> want to see more spending on protecting the environment and almost two thirds of Londoners<sup>4</sup> think protecting and enhancing green spaces should be a higher priority following the pandemic.

Polling shows that  
**8 out of 10**  
Londoners are concerned  
about climate change



It has been estimated that London’s public parks have a value in excess of £91bn,<sup>5</sup> and for each £1 spent on them by local authorities and their partners, Londoners enjoy at least £27 in value. And there is a high level of public support for London’s National Park City<sup>6</sup> status with 9 in 10 supporting its aims and nearly 1 in 20 saying they volunteer or engage in activities that help make London greener, healthier and wilder.

**We therefore urge all local candidates to pledge their support to the More Natural Capital agenda outlined below and to commit to taking action to deliver it if elected.**

\*and the City of London Corporation election on 24th March 2022

# The More Natural Capital coalition

**The More Natural Capital coalition is a group of leading environmental organisations supporting action to improve London for people and nature.**

We came together to prepare a joint campaign for the 2021 Mayoral elections. The coalition has been heartened by cross-party support for our agenda which outlines 24 'calls to action' around four main themes:



**Reducing  
pollution  
and waste**



**Securing  
nature's  
recovery**



**Mitigating and  
increasing resilience  
to climate change**



**Improving health  
and wellbeing  
for all**

By taking action on these issues Borough Councils can improve the lives of local people while protecting and enhancing the natural world.

## How Borough Councils can support A More Natural Capital

While we have been encouraged by the support from the Mayor of London for many of our aspirations, London's Borough Councils have a critical role to play if we are to realise fully these ambitions. The following section identifies the key areas where we would like to see newly elected Borough Councillors take action to deliver a More Natural Capital.

**We are asking all Councillors: Do you support the More Natural Capital agenda? And what action will you take to deliver it?**

# Reduce pollution and waste



**The More Natural Capital coalition** is calling for tougher action to tackle all forms of pollution, improve air quality, reduce wasteful use of land, and secure major improvements in the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste.

## We want Borough Councils to:

**Support the creation of new low traffic neighbourhoods** and engage with the Healthy Streets Borough Scorecard<sup>7</sup> to encourage best practice to reduce car use.

**Reassess parking policies** using the Parking Policy Benchmark Assessment<sup>8</sup> tool to improve air quality, promote active travel and help tackle climate change.

**Demonstrate better use of 'greyspace'**, land previously devoted to car use, and other previously developed land, through decisions on new development.

**Support a 'Zero Waste Borough Scorecard' approach** to waste reduction and recycling to encourage best practice.

**Develop an ambitious plan to reduce food waste**, including by effective arrangements for collection from flats and estates.

**Work with Thames Water**, local catchment partnerships, the Mayor's Office, and Environment Agency to reduce water pollution, rectify pipe misconnections, and reduce road run-off.

**Develop best practice guidance for lighting design<sup>9</sup>** to reduce light pollution and safeguard and extend dark sky areas through decisions on new development and park management, and improvements to highways lighting.



# Secure nature's recovery

**The More Natural Capital coalition** is calling for more ambition to work with local communities and others to secure and expand accessible, well managed, nature-rich, green and blue space.

## We want Borough Councils to:

**Work with the Mayor of London, wildlife NGOs and Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL)** to develop an ecologically coherent 'nature recovery network'<sup>10</sup> with targets to enhance species and habitats, and require new development to deliver net biodiversity gain.

**Support nature-friendly community farms and community orchards** while protecting high-quality farmland or land with the potential to be used for nature-friendly farming or community food growing with public access.

**Endorse the Parks Charter<sup>11</sup> and the Charter for Open Spaces,<sup>12</sup>** including supporting the dedication of green spaces as town or village greens, or Local Green Spaces,<sup>13</sup> and work to increase the number of parks receiving a Green Flag Award.<sup>14</sup>

**Create blue space** by working with local catchment partnerships and others to restore existing wetlands including rivers and ponds, retrofit sustainable drainage schemes, and integrate wetlands into new development.

**Support the creation of new district parks and street parks** by making better use of existing green space and repurposing grey space.

**Refuse development that would damage ancient woodlands, meadows, hedgerows or veteran trees;** reduce the heritage significance of designed landscapes; or result in unacceptable loss of sunlight from green spaces.

**Refuse all development proposals that would result in the loss of Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land.**

# Mitigate and increase resilience to climate change



**The More Natural Capital coalition** is calling for a significant reduction in carbon emissions from transport and buildings, a major increase in renewable energy capacity, and a range of nature-based solutions to the climate crisis.

## We want Borough Councils to:

**Support moves towards a zero-carbon transport sector** by 2030 through a presumption against new roads, opposing airport expansion, and creating zero-carbon delivery zones.

**Lobby Government to ensure all new homes are built to zero carbon standards** and support an ambitious programme to retrofit and sensitively adapt existing housing stock.

**Improve the quality of the landscape around the Council's housing stock** to make it more resilient to climate change and enhance residents' well-being.

**Form a local Climate Emergency Alliance** to support plans to deliver net zero by 2030 or sooner based on a local green jobs and business strategy.

**Promote 'de-paving' in new and existing development** alongside sustainable drainage and cooling measures, including river restoration, rain gardens and hedgerow planting, to help adapt to climate change.

**Increase tree canopy cover sensitively and sustainably** by at least 20% by 2050, including through at least 10 new street tree schemes in each Borough and large-scale woodland creation in the Green Belt.<sup>15</sup>

**Help deliver the Mayor's Action Plan<sup>16</sup> to install 1GW of solar power** in London by 2030 through planning policies, support for community projects, loan finance, and decisions on new development.



# Improve health and wellbeing for all

**The More Natural Capital coalition** is calling for action on climate and nature to deliver significant improvements in public health and enable Londoners to lead greener lifestyles with better access to green and blue spaces.

## We want Borough Councils to:

**Support the creation of at least 10 'tranquil areas'** in new and existing green spaces for rest and relaxation through landscape enhancement schemes, including new hedgerows, and removing through-traffic from parks.

**Support the improvement and expansion of the Walk London<sup>17</sup> network** through the creation of new, high quality 'greenways'<sup>18</sup>, to link green spaces, create greener streets, and bring nature closer to people.

**Prepare local food strategies** incorporating good food retail and procurement policies to improve access to fresh food and champion healthier, plant-based diets and less, low-welfare meat consumption.

**Help to extend the Footways London Network<sup>19</sup>** across the capital to secure attractive, safe, low pollution streets connecting key destinations and public spaces.

**Reduce 'areas of deficiency' in access to nature<sup>20</sup>** through enhancing neglected green and blue spaces for biodiversity and improving access to high quality natural areas.

**Fund community green space projects**, with specific programmes for disadvantaged communities and for schools to connect children with nature.

**Promote the responsible enjoyment of London's 4,000 parks and green spaces** through GoParksLondon<sup>21</sup> and support existing and new Parks Friends Groups.

# Conclusion

**The More Natural Capital coalition has set out this agenda to help those standing for election to London's Borough Councils to deliver a better future for people and nature.**

Communities across the London face unprecedented challenges as we recover from the pandemic and associated economic pressures, and deal with the reality of climate change. While great progress has already been made to improve the environment, green and blue spaces over recent years, there is much more to be done to make London a greener, healthier and more liveable city.

We look forward to working with the newly elected councillors and Borough Councils to deliver A More Natural Capital for the benefit of all Londoners.

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