

# **Breathing Cities - Campaign Briefing**

## ***Breathing Cities is the Green Party's clean air campaign***

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### **Campaign top lines**

#### **Headline bullet point**

*For press release headline, key quote for Green Party spokesperson, social media etc.*

Let's make our cities clean, healthy, and safe: cities we can breathe in.

#### **Top lines**

- The Breathing Cities campaign's ambition is to create living cities that are clean, healthy, and safe.
- We will reverse the air pollution crisis harming our cities and reduce the impact of cities on climate change.
- We will invest in a public transport revolution that will make using a bus, tram, or train the most convenient choice for everyone.
- We will reclaim our city streets for people, making walking and cycling convenient, safe, and enjoyable and ending the domination of the car.
- We will inspire people to create cities that they feel healthy in, with streets where they enjoy spending time.

## Campaign objectives

### NATIONAL CALLS TO GOVERNMENT

1. Publish a new Clean Air Act fit for the 21st Century, which improves on and strengthens existing legislation, establishing clean air as a human right in law<sup>1</sup>. Polling shows that 65% of British public support a new Clean Air Act<sup>2</sup>.
2. Spend at least £30 per person annually on walking and cycling. This is an increase from the Government's current spend of £6.50 per person per year<sup>3</sup>. Money could be redirected from the huge £30 billion allocated to new roads between 2015/16 till 2020/21<sup>4</sup>.
3. Bring forward the phase out of petrol and diesel car sales from 2040 to 2030 at the latest.
4. Implement an expanded national network of Clean Air Zones by the end of 2018<sup>5</sup>, mandated and funded by central Government, to end all illegal air pollution levels as soon as possible within the next two years.
5. Create and fund a targeted diesel scrappage scheme<sup>6</sup> that trades cars for public transport tokens, low emissions car club memberships, cargo bike and electric bike discounts, and subsidies for public transport and clean vehicle infrastructure, including subsidies specifically targeted at lower income drivers and small businesses.
6. Increase the Vehicle Excise Duty for new diesel cars announced in the Autumn Budget 2017 - by at least £800 - so as to reflect the additional cost to society of dirty diesel engines. This would generate £500 million a year, which should be directed at helping fund a targeted diesel scrappage scheme, and not road building or car-dependent development.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cleanair.london/legal/clean-air-is-a-human-right/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/feb/14/65-percent-british-public-want-clean-air-act-pollution-harmful-uk-survey>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog/2017/apr/26/the-government-just-announced-a-gamechanger-for-cycling-in-england>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/blog/roads/231114-road-spending-30-billion>

<sup>5</sup>

<https://cdn.friendsoftheearth.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/Too%20little%20too%20late%20-%20a%20critique%20of%20the%20Air%20Quality%20Plan%20FINAL%2017102017%20UPDATED.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/proposal-national-vehicle-scrappage-fund.pdf>

## LOCAL CALLS TO LOCAL COUNCILS

### LOCAL CALLS

1. Make walking, cycling, and public transport the main forms of urban transport.
2. Make public transport cleaner, more affordable, more accessible, and more joined up.
3. Reduce the need for private car usage and the air pollution it causes.
4. Improve people's health by creating more opportunities for physical activity in everyday journeys, such as walking and cycling.
5. Make streets safe and friendly places where people choose to spend time.

## LOCAL OBJECTIVES

*These local objectives are based on the 5 local calls, and addressed to local councils, whose role it is to meet them. Green councillors and/or a Green Council would aim to meet as many as possible of the local objectives which are relevant and ambitious in their local context.*

### **1. Walking, cycling and public transport as main forms of transport**

- a. Increase the number of miles of protected cycling and walking routes.
- b. Provide protected cycling routes and cycle hire schemes from all train stations and bus interchanges.
- c. Increase the number and quality of pedestrian crossings, including by allowing for more time to cross, and providing single stage crossings rather than multi-stage crossings.
- d. Ensure all pavements are smooth and level, and wide enough for people using wheelchairs or buggies, or walking with children or in groups.
- e. Provide more bicycle parking spaces, from road space rather than walking space.
- f. Increase investment in cycle hire schemes, including schemes with electric bikes.
- g. Plan for new facilities such as shops, schools and public transport stops, to be close to people's homes, so that people are able to reach them on foot.
- h. Ensure all city residents have access to public transport within 400 metres (a 9 minute walk) of where they live.
- i. Make walking, cycling and public transport maps available at all public transport interchanges, and at as many stops as practically feasible.
- j. To inform future investment, collect evidence (quantitative and qualitative) about walking, cycling, use of public transport, and the experiences of people walking, cycling, and using public transport.

## 2. Public transport

- a. Provide clean, affordable, reliable and accessible buses so that wherever people live, they can access work, healthcare, education and shops conveniently by bus. Partnerships between Councils and private bus companies can help achieve this.<sup>7</sup>
- b. Ensure good connectivity between different public transport modes, for example train-tram and train-bus links.
- c. Make National Rail stations fully accessible.<sup>8</sup>

## 3. Reduce car usage and its pollution

- a. Implement stronger Air Quality Action Plans and Clean Air Zones by the end of 2018, to end all illegal air pollution levels as soon as possible within the next two years<sup>9</sup>.
- b. Introduce a council-wide workplace parking levy<sup>10</sup>, using the money raised to fund initiatives such as community schemes around active transport.
- c. Encourage deliveries by bicycle<sup>11</sup> and consolidate goods deliveries for businesses.
- d. Implement a zero emissions policy for council taxi and private hire vehicle licenses.
- e. Fine idling.
- f. Encourage low emission car sharing and car clubs.
- g. Put planning policy into place that avoids car-dependent housing schemes being built.

## 4. Physical activity

- a. Increase the number of walk and cycle to work schemes.
- b. Increase the number of walk and cycle to school schemes, including the introduction of School Streets<sup>12,13,14</sup>, with provision for children or parents with mobility issues.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/The%20Brighton%20Story%20-%20Mark%20Prior%20%281%29.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/static/documents/content/Making\\_Rail\\_Accessible\\_VT\\_Nov2016.pdf](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/static/documents/content/Making_Rail_Accessible_VT_Nov2016.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://cdn.friendsoftheearth.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/Too%20little%20too%20late%20-%20a%20critique%20of%20the%20Air%20Quality%20Plan%20FINAL%2017102017%20UPDATED.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/transport-parking-and-streets/parking-and-permits/workplace-parking-levy/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.pedalandpost.co.uk/>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.streetsaheadinburgh.org.uk/streetsahead/info/35/school\\_travel/87/school\\_streets](http://www.streetsaheadinburgh.org.uk/streetsahead/info/35/school_travel/87/school_streets)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.hackney.gov.uk/school-streets>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/what-we-do/stories/school-road-closure-in-camden>

- c. Introduce Play Streets<sup>15</sup> in multiple streets in front of schools and in residential areas.

## 5. Safe and friendly streets

- a. Implement a Vision 0 approach to road danger<sup>16</sup> with a long-term vision for streets free from collisions and injuries.
- b. Reduce speed limits to 20mph or less in city centres, including main roads and high streets where many people live, work, and shop.
- c. Introduce low traffic neighbourhoods<sup>17</sup> with streets designed to be convenient and safe for everyone to use, in particular pedestrians, cyclists, and people using public transport.
- d. Provide and maintain access to green open space (at least a local, small, or pocket park) for every resident, no more than 400 metres (a 9 minutes walk) from where they live<sup>18</sup>.
- e. Restrict HGVs traffic in city centres, especially at peak times, and around construction sites and residential areas.
- f. Reduce rat-running through residential areas by filtering residential streets to limit access to just walking and cycling<sup>19</sup>.
- g. Make streets more attractive through planting flowers and trees, introducing creative seating, lighting, public art exhibitions, street markets and fairs.

## Key facts on air pollution

- Air pollution exacerbates respiratory conditions including asthma<sup>20</sup>, and is linked to stunted lung growth in children<sup>21</sup>, heart attacks, strokes<sup>22</sup> and cancer<sup>23</sup>. A study by the Royal College of Physicians estimated that air pollution contributed to 40,000 premature deaths every year in the UK<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://playingout.net/>

<sup>16</sup>

<https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/local-transport-today/supplements/619/47115/britain-needs-a-vision-zero-approach-to-road-danger-reduction/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/about-mini-holland/>

<sup>18</sup> Page 7:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/357411/Review8\\_Green\\_spaces\\_health\\_inequalities.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/357411/Review8_Green_spaces_health_inequalities.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/dictionary/modal-filter>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.asthma.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/our-policy-work/air-pollution-affects-asthma/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa040610>

<sup>22</sup>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/news-from-the-bhf/news-archive/2017/april/bhf-responds-to-new-research-that-reveals-how-air-pollution-causes-heart-attacks-and-strokes>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-24564446>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.clientearth.org/uk-government-back-court-face-third-air-pollution-challenge-clientearth/>

- The latest Government plans fail to provide the necessary measures to clean up air pollution in 45 Local Authority areas in England that have illegal levels of pollution<sup>25</sup>.
- Transport is now the highest greenhouse gas emitting sector<sup>26</sup>, with 26% of total UK GHG emissions in 2016 (121 MtCO<sub>2</sub> equivalent<sup>27</sup>).
- Road transport is responsible for on average 80% of air pollution where legal limits are being broken<sup>28</sup>.
- The latest government statistics showed that emissions from transport continued to increase (by 2%) between 2015 and 2016, driven by increased emissions from passenger cars and HGVs.<sup>29</sup>
- The 37 out of 43 zones across the UK that were breaching legal nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) air pollution limits in 2015 are still being illegally polluted today.<sup>30</sup>
- At the beginning of October 2017 it was revealed that every area of London breaches World Health Organisation standards for PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution particles. with most areas exceeding levels by at least 50% (WHO limit is 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup>)<sup>31</sup>. PM is particulate matter: tiny particles that are so small they enter your bloodstream when you breathe them in. They are produced from tyre and brake wear.
- The Government has been taken to court three times because of illegal air pollution levels in the UK since 2015<sup>32</sup>.
- Air pollution increases inequalities as areas with the most heavy traffic are often those used by the most disadvantaged people to live, work and shop.
- Air pollution also disproportionately impacts on the most vulnerable such as older people, disabled people, and children.
- Air pollution in the UK costs more than £20 billion per year according to The Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health<sup>33</sup>.
- As well as NO<sub>2</sub> being a greenhouse gas, CO<sub>2</sub> is the most common greenhouse gas (GHG) contributing to global warming. The policies required to reduce car usage and clean the air will at the same time help tackle climate change in an effective, locally-driven way.
- 65% of British public support a new clean air act<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.clientearth.org/uk-government-back-court-face-third-air-pollution-challenge-clientearth/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/final-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-1990-2016>

<sup>27</sup>

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-Report-to-Parliament-Meeting-Carbon-Budgets-Closing-the-policy-gap.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.healthyair.org.uk/4672-2/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/final-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-1990-2016>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.clientearth.org/new-uk-air-pollution-figures-reveal-shocking-lack-progress/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/oct/04/revealed-every-londoner-breathing-dangerous-levels-of-toxic-air-particle>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.clientearth.org/uk-government-back-court-face-third-air-pollution-challenge-clientearth/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/feb/14/65-percent-british-public-want-clean-air-act-pollution-harmful-uk-survey>

## Campaign narrative

Breathing Cities is a vision for living cities that are clean, healthy, and safe.

Transport policy over recent decades has been all about helping more cars move around our cities whereas what we actually need is a transport policy that focuses on moving more people around. If we want people to be able to get around more quickly then we have to focus on the most efficient use of the space available. Single occupant cars are a very inefficient way for people to move around and anyone driving at rush hour in one of our cities knows that the speed of traffic is slowing every year. Our solution is to make it easier for people to use other modes of transport that will free up more road space and so improve transport for everyone.

Imagine cities with people enjoying walking outside in unpolluted, safe, attractive streets and city centres. Imagine cycling along networks of protected cycle lanes, free from the noise of traffic and exposure to dirty air. Imagine clean public transport accessible to all, that takes you where you want at your convenience, without the hassle of congestion. Imagine cities where older and disabled people can get around safely and conveniently in fully accessible buses and taxis, unperturbed by traffic. Imagine streets that have been reclaimed by people and become social places where we choose to spend time, be creative, connect with our communities, and have fun. Imagine living in cities with the knowledge that they are not disproportionately contributing to worsening climate breakdown.

By focussing on improving transport as a whole, this campaign is about enabling people to live in and move around clean, healthy and safe cities fit for the 21st century.

### Brief rationale behind 5 local calls

#### 1. Walking, cycling and public transport

- Pedestrians, cyclists and trams produce no exhaust emissions.
- 'Euro 6' buses are a huge improvement in terms of pollution: they emit ten times less NOx per litre of fuel than 'Euro 6' standard cars<sup>35</sup>. The electricity that powers vehicles like trams and trains will have to come from renewable sources.
- Buses are highly efficient users of space as they can typically hold 60 (single-decker) to 90 (double-decker) passengers, whilst only occupying a fraction of the space that would be needed to transport as many people in cars.
- Alongside developing new initiatives, we will have a strong voice in highlighting the inconsistencies of decisions being made at a local level that are polluting the air.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/06/diesel-cars-are-10-times-more-toxic-than-trucks-and-buses-data-shows>

## **2. Better public transport**

- Proper investment in clean public transport reduces CO2 emissions and air pollution, as well as saving people money and time.
- Improved bus punctuality and journey time will enable people to travel faster and more smoothly by public transport rather than by private car.
- By seeing public transport as a common good, we will ensure that it is always affordable for everyone to use, much like a Living Wage or Living Rent keeps pace with inflation.
- Increasing the accessibility of public transport for people with reduced mobility will be a priority, enabling everyone to get from one place to another with ease, free from the danger and pollution of car traffic.

## **3. Private car usage**

- As well as improved walking, cycling and public transport, reducing the need to use cars is ultimately the most effective way to reduce the nitrogen oxides (NOx), particulate matter (PM), and CO2 emissions from car exhausts, as well as the PM emissions from brake and tyre wear.
- Single occupant cars take up lots of road space for driving and parking, and make congestion worse. Low emission car sharing schemes can reduce the number of cars on the road and consequently reduce CO2 emissions and congestion.
- Building new roads induces demand for more cars. Breathing Cities aims to ensure that all new developments have robust travel planning measures in place that include good walking and cycling connections to facilities and existing communities. For example, new development should provide minimal or no onsite parking if the transport links are numerous and convenient, and developers could contribute to low-emission car club memberships.
- Ultimately, reducing the need for private car usage depends on investment in public transport. The capacity for people to reduce their car usage is based on the availability of reliable public transport nearby, linking people to local amenities and services. There are strong regional differences not only in access to convenient public transport, but also in the proximity of local amenities and services such as schools, doctors and shops.
- Breathing Cities aims to give people a say on how their neighbourhoods are designed through street audits to discuss ideas about how to improve their streets in a move away from dependency on polluting cars and the congestion they cause. The aim would be to use the evidence gathered to lobby the council to implement any traffic reduction measures based on the audit results.

#### 4. Physical activity

- Cities that have cleaner air are cities in which it is healthier and more enjoyable to be physically active. And if people choose to walk, run or cycle to work rather than use diesel vehicles, this in turn greatly contributes to reducing toxic emissions, doubly improving people's health.
- Only 38% of men and 25.5% of women in England and Wales meet the guideline for adults of 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity on at least 5 days a week<sup>36</sup>. Active commuting, particularly cycling, is associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer<sup>37</sup>.
- Simply walking to and from public transport stops is an easy way to introduce physical activity into day to day life.
- Initiatives such as School Streets and Play Streets enable children to walk or cycle to school in a safe, friendly environment, and reclaim the street for play after school or at weekends, helping them engage naturally in physical activity.

#### 5. Safe and friendly streets

- If streets were safer, more friendly and pleasant places, away from the pollution, danger, and noise of traffic, people would be more likely to spend time there, use different means of transport than cars, and make improvements that reduce air pollution.
- We aim for the Vision Zero approach to road danger which means eventually no one will be killed in a crash or collision on our streets<sup>38</sup>. Traffic systems should take account of human fallibility and minimize both the opportunities for errors and the harm done when they occur.
- Measures that make streets safer, such as reducing speed limits to 20mph, and restricting access for HGVs, also help reduce polluting emissions.
- People feel safer in protected walking and cycling paths, free from the danger of collision with cars.
- Road space (not walking space) should be reallocated to cycling rather than mixing people on foot and bicycle together, as this may cause conflict.
- Breathing Cities will enable neighbourhoods to reclaim their streets as areas where they can socialise, play, and shape their community. Inspiring initiatives that are already taking place include low traffic neighbourhoods such as Mini Holland in Waltham Forest<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-active-stay-active-a-report-on-physical-activity-from-the-four-home-countries-chief-medical-officers>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.bmj.com/content/357/bmj.j1456>

<sup>38</sup>

<https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/local-transport-today/supplements/619/47115/britain-needs-a-vision-zero-approach-to-road-danger-reduction/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/about-mini-holland/>

, where streets are designed to be fit for everyone to use, whether you walk, cycle, use public transport or drive.

- Britain in Bloom projects brighten up and regenerate areas through planting combined with projects that tackle litter and antisocial behaviour, and inspire a positive attitude towards local environment improvements<sup>40</sup>. Introducing flowers and trees into streets creates an attractive and leafy environment, as well as providing shelter and mitigating pollution. Recent Bloom projects have included wildlife gardens, orchards, green play areas, gated alleyways and flowering baskets. Participation in such projects increases people's sense of ownership and determination of where they live and travel.
- Street art and lighting (energy-efficient lighting that is mindful of light pollution effects) can greatly enhance the experience and feeling of safety when walking down a street. Creative seating can provide places to rest whilst giving the street local character. The scale to which these initiatives can be implemented depends the type of street, and some may not be possible to their full extent on main roads.

## Local campaign action ideas

*Action flatpacks will be provided in due course if needed.*

- Car-free days & Street parties.<sup>41</sup>
- Bike take-overs.
- Air pollution monitoring, with possibility to partner with Mapping for Change<sup>42</sup> and Living Streets<sup>43</sup>.
- Street audits. Public engagement with this type of activity is high, especially from more vulnerable groups (older and disabled people).
- Trial the implementing low traffic neighbourhoods e.g. Waltham Forest.<sup>44</sup>
- Implement "School Streets" school road closures e.g. Edinburgh<sup>45</sup>, Hackney<sup>46</sup> and Camden.<sup>47</sup>
- Implement "Play Streets"<sup>48</sup> road closures in which children reclaim the street for play after school or at weekends.

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<sup>40</sup> [http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/709/looking\\_after\\_parks\\_and\\_open\\_spaces/5772/britain\\_in\\_bloom](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/709/looking_after_parks_and_open_spaces/5772/britain_in_bloom)

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-guide-to-organising-a-street-party>

<sup>42</sup> <http://mappingforchange.org.uk/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/>

<sup>44</sup> Page 3 of [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/prioritising\\_people\\_nov2016.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/prioritising_people_nov2016.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.streetsaheadedinburgh.org.uk/streetsahead/info/35/school\\_travel/87/school\\_streets](http://www.streetsaheadedinburgh.org.uk/streetsahead/info/35/school_travel/87/school_streets)

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.hackney.gov.uk/school-streets>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/what-we-do/stories/school-road-closure-in-camden>

<sup>48</sup> <http://playingout.net/>