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Dear Ms. Rooney,

**Friends of the Earth Response – “A City for All Londoners”**

1. Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation document from Mayor Sadiq Khan, in which he puts across his vision for London for the immediate, short and long term. While the document's scope is broader than that of just town planning, the London Plan is listed as one of the key strategies by which the General London Assembly (GLA) aims to realise the Mayor's objectives, as put forward within the consultation document.
2. We have therefore made comment on these objectives, within four main headings of Climate Change, Environment, Air Quality and Transport, with comments drawn from the whole document on these areas which are priority issues for our organisation.
3. We further support best practice in public participation in developing plans and programmes that affect the environment as set out in the Aarhus Convention's Implementation Guide on Public Participation.

**Climate change**

4. London must do its part in meeting the Paris' agreement's goals, and doing so can be overwhelmingly good news – for the economy, people and environment. But it requires a rapid ramping up of ambition and momentum, starting in 2017. Only with greater political action can London do its part in protecting people from the rapidly escalating risks from climate change and show leadership globally.
5. The Climate Change Act (2008) puts a duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 80% lower than the 1990 baseline, which includes CO<sup>2</sup>. There is also a statutory duty for plan making authorities (as set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)) to ensure:

*“Development plan documents must (taken as a whole) include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change<sup>1</sup>”*

### Meeting the Paris Agreement

6. As a world city, London must play its part in meeting the Paris Climate Agreement goal to keep global temperature rises below 1.5c. We strongly welcomed your pre-election statement that London's Climate Change Action Plan should be in line with the Paris Agreement, and your pledge to ensure a review of London's climate change goals. We urge you to ensure that the London Plan and all of your strategies commit London to delivering our fair share of action to meet the Paris Agreement target to keep global temperature rises below 1.5 degrees.

## **Environment**

### Green Belt Protection

7. We welcome ongoing protection of the Green Belt in relation to growing housing and development pressures, as stated at page 11 of the document. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and national policy (National Planning Policy Framework/ NPPF) both highlight the national importance placed on the Green Belt, principally in terms of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, in line with the five key principles<sup>2</sup>:
  - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
8. None of these principles should be set aside now.
9. Development of such land other than for those types which are considered “appropriate”<sup>3</sup>, would not be compatible with the aims of this approach. We support the use of green belt to provide access to nature and wildlife protection, renewable energy and food growing.

### Development at Transport Hubs

10. We are of the view that adherence to Green Belt principles would help to focus the delivery of high density housing developments within and around well-connected and sustainable transport hubs across London, as set out at pages 9 and 19 of the consultation document (an approach also supported by planning legislation<sup>4</sup>). Encouraging new residential, economic and other compatible forms of development at such hubs is in line with sustainable development objectives, assuming that residential uses can successfully be accommodated through excellent standards of design including space standards, energy efficiency, noise insulation, air quality and health.
11. The Mayor's aims to deliver ‘good growth’<sup>5</sup> (which includes GLA targets to deliver 50% of new builds that are affordable) should also be a key factor in bringing forward a balance of tenures and opening up the housing market for a wider socio-economic range of Londoners at such hubs. The Mayor should

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1 Section 19(1) Planning and Compulsory Purchase (2004)

2 Para 80: NPPF - [http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/9-protecting-green-belt-land/#paragraph\\_80](http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/9-protecting-green-belt-land/#paragraph_80)

3 Para 89 – NPPF (as above for link)

4 Housing and Planning Act (2016)

5 Pg. 23 – A City for All Londoners - 2016

use his powers to secure high quality social and affordable housing and not rely upon the market to deliver in this regard.

### Affordable Zero Carbon Homes

12. Linked to the above, the aim to incorporate homes that are well designed and energy efficient, as well as affordable across London, is supported by Friends of the Earth. With over 27% of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions emanating from the residential sector, tackling energy efficiency and sustainable design in our housing stock is critical<sup>6</sup>.
13. We welcome the zero carbon aims for 2050<sup>7</sup> for London as a whole, of which new build homes built in London over the plan period will play a part. We also trust that the Mayor will build upon London Plan policy measures already in place in which to meet such aims. Current London Plan Policies 5.2 and 5.3 (and associated Supplementary Guidance on Housing/ SPG) already make clear that zero carbon standards would be introduced for new London housing from October 2016, despite Government efforts to roll-back such requirements nationally<sup>8</sup>. This approach should be continued.
14. We would hope that the GLA is resilient in its role to ensure that zero carbon means exactly this for new dwellings, matching Level 5 CfSH framework requirements moving forward and that the definition will not be diluted, despite national government efforts. We support the SPG's current wording that finds these higher standards for new housing in London *are* viable and that the development industry have and will continue to be made aware of this going forward<sup>9</sup>. We trust that such standards will be included with delivery of the affordable housing stock going forward also, the costs of which can be offset from the gains made from open market residential developments, especially in the context of London.
15. Linked to the objective for a zero carbon London by 2050 is the need to incorporate renewable energy generation within new development coming forward. We support the Mayor's proposed 'Energy for Londoners' scheme, which encourages a step change in the delivery of energy supply (pg. 61), but feel the document lacks detail in delivering the initiatives proposed: such as supporting solar and local community energy enterprises and retrofitting of buildings. These schemes would require consideration of different frameworks, with the delivery of solar panels on a large scale requiring consideration of renewables subsidy mechanisms, such as the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) scheme. We presume the Mayor and GLA are aware that subsidies in these areas have been reduced considerably by national government in the last year, and so it would be interesting to understand what kind of 'support' is being put forward to enable delivery of such decentralised renewable energy generation and what sort of conditions are being considered to ensure community (part) ownership of such schemes.
16. Consideration of the sustainable design (including energy efficiency) and micro generation potential of new houses and buildings within GLA and TfL ownership should be considered as a Mayoral priority going forward. To provide context, Section 210 of Housing and Planning Act (2016) asks for all buildings under local council and military ownership to be audited for their contribution to climate change, including a freehold or leasehold interest. All such buildings should have a 'building efficiency and sustainability assessment' undertaken, and relevant authorities ensure that their buildings fall within the "*top quartile of energy performance*"<sup>10</sup>. The Mayor could seek to ensure that these non-residential buildings within his power are subject to similar requirements going forward, although whether a new London Plan policy is the right mechanism to achieve this aim is questionable, especially for existing buildings.

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6 'How Low' report - Centre for Sustainable Energy - <https://www.cse.org.uk/projects/view/1112>

7 Pg. 61 – A City for All Londoners - 2016

8 Written Ministerial Statement (March 2015) stating that local authorities should not set such requirements above Level 4; instead of Level 5 of redacted Code for Sustainable Homes Framework/CfSH).

9 Para 2.3.57 – GLA Housing SPG – March 2016

10 Pg. 118 – Housing and Planning Act 2016 - [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/22/pdfs/ukpga\\_20160022\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/22/pdfs/ukpga_20160022_en.pdf)

## Existing homes

17. The commitment to insulate existing homes is welcome, as is the commitment to play a leadership role in improving the private rented sector, and the Mayor's pre-election promise to make the case to Government for London-wide landlord licencing. London's private rented sector has the highest proportion of the coldest homes in the city. We urge the Mayor to continue to make the case for London-wide licencing, and to commit to introduce a minimum standard in the private rented sector of Energy Performance Certificate C by 2025, as a condition of licencing.

## **Air Quality**

18. As stated within the consultation document, 9,500 Londoners die each year due to poor air quality, with deprived areas more likely to be affected than wealthier areas, in turn leading to spatial health inequalities<sup>11</sup>. The document also states that 25% of the city's schools are within some of those areas with the unhealthiest levels of air pollution. In addition, Friends of the Earth have found studies showing that long term childhood exposure to air pollution can lead to permanent reduced lung function, and that dirty air can affect the healthy development of fetuses<sup>12</sup>.
19. The recent Client Earth case is a case in point which highlights concern of air pollution in London, but also other cities across the UK. In this instance, the Government lost its case in the High Court in failing time line objectives for compliance with the EU Air Quality Directive, for parts of London and other cities in the UK. The judge stated the Government had erred in law by fixing compliance dates based on over optimistic modelling of pollution levels within its Air Quality Plan (2015). Evidence was also heard that plans for a network of Clean Air Zones across major cities had also been scaled back on cost grounds<sup>13</sup>.
20. We therefore welcome the Mayor's ambition to bring air quality down to safer levels across London, but believe that more could be done than what is being proposed. The workshop minutes linked to the consultation for Air Quality<sup>14</sup> supports this consensus that more can be proposed and achieved to combat air pollution. Low emissions zones, emissions surcharges, overall vehicle reduction, as well as our own thinking linked to behavioural change regarding transport modes (see transport section below) and diesel scrappage schemes can all contribute in to improving air quality.

## Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ)

21. While the introduction of an Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) is welcomed, the Mayor's proposal for the zone to extend to both the North and South Circular routes for all vehicles is, at this point, only a suggestion<sup>15</sup>. Friends of the Earth take the view that such a zone should be applied to the whole of London for all vehicles in order to contribute to meeting the expectations of the EU Air Quality Directive (2008). This Directive sets legally binding limits in outdoor air for major air pollutants in the UK.<sup>16</sup>

## The Emissions Surcharge

22. The Mayor's proposed Emissions Surcharge/ 'T Charge' is welcomed. However, we strongly feel that the 'T-Charge' must include all diesel cars, not just older models. Diesel is a class 1 carcinogen - like tobacco smoke<sup>17</sup>. With many cleaner alternatives on the market, it is vital that the 'T-Charge' encourages people to switch away from diesel altogether, rather than simply buying newer model diesels. Dialogue from the consultation workshops was supportive of measures to stop the problems of

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11 Pg. 58 – City for All Londoners – 2016

12 Every Breath We Take – Royal College of Physicians – 2016 <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution>

13 Clean Earth Press Release: <http://www.clientearth.org/major-victory-health-uk-high-court-government-inaction-air-pollution/>

14 <https://www.london.gov.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/all-consultations/city-all-londoners#acc-i-44850>

15 See footnote 11 above.

16 DEFRA - <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/air-pollution/uk-eu-policy-context>

17 International Agency for Research on Cancer: [https://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2012/pdfs/pr213\\_E.pdf](https://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2012/pdfs/pr213_E.pdf)

running diesel vehicles shifting to a greater reliance on unleaded vehicles; with unleaded fuel still a derivative from fossil fuel and contributing to climate change. Vehicle scrappage schemes are also encouraged but would need to maximise the take up of non-polluting vehicles if it is to have maximum effect, not just allowing replacement unleaded vehicles.

23. The Mayor also aims to use his TfL powers to encourage procurement of hybrid/ green buses by 2018 and to retrofit existing buses for inner London by 2019 and 2020 for outside central London. Such aims are admirable, but more needs to be done. The Mayor should ban buses running on diesel from central London and within/adjacent to pollution hotspots (including Air Quality Management Areas) from 2018, and commit to buying only electric single-decker buses from the same date. Such options are available, and the receipts from developing TfL land for housing could offset such costs.
24. Overall, in order to clean up London's air from a vehicle perspective, diesel must be phased out of the city altogether. We note the commitment from Paris, Mexico City, Athens and Madrid to ban diesel vehicles by 2025. We urge the Mayor to join these cities and commit to banning diesel from London by 2025.

#### Reducing Air Quality Impact from Non Vehicle Sources

25. Air Quality impacts are not just linked to emissions from vehicles, and town planning mechanisms exist which the Mayor could use to improve air quality from new developments, in particular incorporating walking and cycling routes linked to new major developments or incorporating green spaces within and around them.
26. Planning authorities also have a role to play in contributing to air quality within plan making. Planning Practice Guidance states that Local Plans can affect air quality in a number of ways, including through deciding; *"what development is proposed and where, and the encouragement given to sustainable transport."*<sup>18</sup> PPG also states that in plan making, *"it is important to take into account air quality management areas and other areas where there could be specific requirements or limitations on new development because of air quality"*<sup>19</sup>.
27. We would ask that more thought is given towards preserving the objectives of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) across London. These areas should be continued to be identified areas for focus for action, and further emphasis should be put within the London Plan and on local authorities to ensure development in these areas is compatible with objectives of these areas. In this context, the document also supports new housing developments being co-located with light industry in certain instances. In our view and in light of above air concerns, there would need to be careful consideration of impacts to residents, and any approach would need to be fully assessed.

## Transport

28. Paragraph 30 of the NPPF encourages transport solutions that *"support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion"*. Transport policies also have an *"important role to plan in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives"* (para 30 – NPPF).
29. Banishing dirty vehicles overall and preventing inappropriate development from sensitive air quality areas across London is vital. As stated above, petrol vehicles also pollute the air, and even electric cars produce air pollution from their brakes and tyres. London therefore needs policies to give everyone real alternatives to driving, such as more and better cycling and walking infrastructure, and more affordable public transport. In the longer term, it is vital that London's communities are designed

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18 Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 32-002-20140306 – Planning Practice Guidance -

<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/air-quality/what-is-the-role-of-local-plans-with-regard-to-air-quality/>

19 See footnote 18



so that key services are in easy reach, reducing the need to travel. Such an approach is backed up by the Core Planning principles within the NPPF<sup>20</sup>.

30. We welcome the Mayor's aspirations to reduce traffic within the city of London (as per page 11), encourage more sustainable modes of transport, such as cycling and walking (pg. 21) and proposals to pedestrianise Oxford Street are all positives. The concept of 'Healthy Streets' should deliver health benefits also as traditional types of urban transport are put aside in favour of more sustainable modes. While the Mayor refers to "*significant benefits*" resulting across London; the detail is limited and pedestrianisation is mainly referred to in the context of Oxford Street (pg. 62) and no other key London nodes. More key routes should therefore be put forward as having potential to be pedestrianised over the coming years.
31. There is however a disconnect between some of the Mayor's aspirations, including the desire to reduce traffic overall, and encouraging means to promote further road use, such as proposals for new road tunnels (i.e. Silvertown). If the Mayor is looking to encourage less car and van use and promote a more compact, connected and healthy city, the desire for more roads proposed at page 31 flies in the face of these sustainable development and transport objectives. With 80% of the city's public space delivered in the form of roads and streets<sup>21</sup>, and in light of the transport planning principles highlighted in the NPPF, the mayor should commit to not building any further road infrastructure, and instead focus on bringing forward better and more affordable public transport, cycling and walking infrastructures.
32. Proposals to build cycle and pedestrian bridges across the Thames are however welcomed, including plans to connect the areas of Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf. Schemes that encourage greater public transport capacity are needed, also, especially as tube and overland rail services to provide dedicated public transport services that are independent of the congested road infrastructure. The Queen Elizabeth line and a new DLR Thames Crossing are examples of investment being undertaken; albeit delivery will in the long term. The tram schemes such as the Brixton – Euston connection should be revived.
33. Cycle and pedestrian routes could be brought forward across the city within shorter timeframes, and could deliver benefits on a larger scale. While recent press announcements suggest GLAs policy direction in this regard<sup>22</sup>, with extensions to plans for cycle superhighways and additional funding for similar schemes, the Mayor needs to highlight his strategy to ensure their delivery. There is also an opportunity to embed further mechanisms within the London Plan for the delivery of such routes with new proposals for new development (notwithstanding the role Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) mechanisms and planning obligations play at the sourcing funding at the Borough level). Is there not scope for a portion of CIL to deliver to sustainable transport schemes across the City? We presume a revised TfL Strategy will provide opportunities to contribute suggestions in due course and appreciate the scope of this document is limited to general aims and objectives.

## Conclusion

34. We welcome the aim to improve air quality and tackle environmental concerns as set out in the proposals. However, we are concerned by some proposals which appear to run counter to some of the Mayor's stated aims. For instance his proposal to build new houses adjacent to areas of light industry, and his support for new roads and new road tunnels, which will increase traffic, and air pollution. Such aims are counterintuitive in our view, and conflict with other aims highlighted by the Mayor.

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20 Pg. 5 – NPPF - 2012

21 Pg. 62 – City for All Londoners – 2016

22 Sadiq Khan to spend £770m on London cycling initiatives – Guardian - <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog/2016/dec/05/sadiq-khan-to-spend-770m-on-london-cycling-initiatives>

35. The document is a positive start and we hope to contribute further to the discussion going forward in due course, including London Plan formation. In the meantime, the Mayor should continue to deliver as far as possible on the aims and objectives he has put forward at this stage.

Yours sincerely,

**Magnus Gallie - Planner**

**Sophie Neuberg - London Campaigner**