



Briefing for Labour Councillors  
[www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com](http://www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com)

## LGA Labour – Air Quality Campaign Pack for Labour Party Councillors

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The LGA Labour Group exists to provide a strong voice for Labour in local government, both within the cross-party LGA and within the wider Labour Party. We represent and support Labour councils and opposition Labour Groups in England and Wales, including political support, leadership training, and sector-led improvement. We aim to influence and set the political agenda on the issues that matter to Labour councils so they are able to deliver local solutions to national problems.

Our leadership, officers, and regional representatives are elected by Labour Groups on an annual basis, and our elected leader, Cllr Nick Forbes, is the de facto leader of Labour in local government.

As part of our work supporting Labour councillors to tackle climate change and create greener communities, the LGA Labour Group has produced campaign packs on the climate emergency and other environmental issues.

This campaign pack focuses on Air Quality, and contains:

1. A briefing for Labour councillors (see below)
2. A briefing for Labour Party members
3. A model press release
4. A model air quality motion for Labour Groups and Full Councils

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### *Background*

- **The UK government considers poor air quality to be the largest environmental risk to public health in the United Kingdom.**
- **In 2017, the Royal College of Physicians estimated that the annual cost of health problems arising from exposure to air pollution in the UK exceeds £20 billion.** This includes costs to society and business, health services and individuals who are affected. Groups such as children and the elderly are particularly at risk, but those who live in urban areas and near busy roads are also at risk from the negative effects of air pollution. Long term health implications of air pollution can include an increased risk of lung cancer and cardiovascular disease, and in pregnancy it can have a detrimental effect on foetal lung development.
- **The UK has failed to meet continuing air quality targets** set by the EU, with a number of areas in the UK, particularly in town centres, regularly breaching Nitrogen Dioxide limits. The

UK is obliged under international treaties to meet air quality targets, but the legislation comes from the EU. The government has said that they are committed to this legislation after Britain leaves the EU.

- **Local councils know their areas best, and many are taking bold action to tackle poor air quality in their areas.** Under the 2011 Localism Act, the government has had discretionary powers to pass on EU fines to local authorities who are deemed responsible for breaches in EU legislation.

*What is happening now?*

- **Labour-run councils across the country are taking action to tackle the causes and effects of air quality.** This ranges from:
  - the introduction of a **Zero Emissions Zone** by **Oxford City Council**;
  - **Newham Council's** approach of pursuing a **sustainable growth agenda** which includes tackling poor air quality in the borough;
  - **Investing in electric vehicles** – several councils including **Harrow Council** have replaced old council vehicles with electric vehicles and will gradually phase petrol vehicles out, and other councils such as **Bradford Council** are introducing EV charging points across the borough to encourage residents and businesses to switch to electric vehicles;
  - **Taking action to clean up transport** – **Southampton City Council** are cleaning up their bus fleet and encouraging taxi drivers to invest in greener vehicles through the licencing system, **Plymouth City Council** is investing in cycling infrastructure and **Stockport Council** are improving public realm infrastructure to encourage more people to make journeys by public transport, foot and bike
- All of this best practice, and much more, can be found on the LGA Labour's Climate Emergency website – [www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com](http://www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com)
- In early 2019, **Theresa May's government announced plans to tackle air quality which included halving the number of people in the UK who live in areas that breach WHO guidelines on particulate matter by 2025**, and bring forward an Environment Bill. However, following the change of Prime Minister, there's been little mention of whether the government plans to stick with these plans.

*What needs to happen?*

- **The government needs to be clear about their plans for tackling air quality.** Councils have lost 60p in every £1 since 2010, and for councils to be able to tackle air quality the government needs to restore local government funding to 2010 levels over the next four years. The government also needs to take a joined-up approach to tackling air quality, with government departments being consistent in their message and support to councils about tackling poor air quality.
- **Take a look at the LGA Labour Climate Emergency website** – [www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com](http://www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com) and see if there's any best practice that will work in your local area and can be adopted by your council.
- **Speak to residents about what measures they are already taking to tackle air quality**, and what steps they think that the local council, businesses and other organisations can take to play their part in tackling air quality.

# LGA LABOUR CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Briefing for Labour Party members

[www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com](http://www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com)

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## Briefing for Labour Party members

The LGA Labour Group exists to provide a strong voice for Labour in local government, both within the cross-party LGA and within the wider Labour Party. We represent and support Labour councils and opposition Labour Groups in England and Wales, including political support, leadership training, and sector-led improvement. We aim to influence and set the political agenda on the issues that matter to Labour councils so they are able to deliver local solutions to national problems.

Our leadership, officers, and regional representatives are elected by Labour Groups on an annual basis, and our elected leader, Cllr Nick Forbes, is the de facto leader of Labour in local government.

As part of our work supporting Labour councillors to tackle climate change and create greener communities, the LGA Labour Group has produced campaign packs on the climate emergency and other environmental issues.

- **We are facing a climate emergency – the IPCC has found that temperatures are likely to rise by 1.5C by 2050.**
- **Poor air quality is a deadly symptom of climate change**, which is largely made by human activity and disproportionately affects vulnerable people and those living in urban areas.
- **Poor air quality can be successfully tackled at a local level**, as many Labour-run councils are showing. Councils have lost 60p in every £1 since 2010, and for councils to be able to tackle air quality the government needs to restore local government funding to 2010 levels over the next four years, and ensure that government departments have a joined up and consistent approach when working with councils trying to tackle poor air quality.
- **Labour councillors are leading the way in tackling poor air quality in their towns and cities.**  
This includes:
  - the introduction of a **Zero Emissions Zone by Oxford City Council**;
  - **Newham Council’s approach of pursuing a sustainable growth agenda** which includes tackling poor air quality in the borough;
  - **Investing in electric vehicles –Harrow Council have replaced old council vehicles** with electric vehicles and will gradually phase petrol vehicles out, and **Bradford Council are introducing EV charging points across the borough** to encourage residents and businesses to switch to electric vehicles;
  - **Taking action to clean up transport – Southampton City Council are cleaning up their bus fleet and encouraging taxi drivers to invest in greener vehicles, Plymouth City Council is investing in cycling infrastructure** and **Stockport Council are improving public**

**realm infrastructure** to encourage more people to make journeys by public transport, foot and bike.

All of this best practice, and much more, can be found on the LGA Labour's Climate Emergency website – [www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com](http://www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com)

### **How Labour Party members can help tackle the climate emergency**

- Organise a meeting for Labour Party members to talk about actions to tackle poor air quality, and invite your local Labour councillor to speak at it;
- Pass a motion at your branch and CLP to pledge to work with your council or Labour Group to tackle poor air quality;
- Take steps to reduce your individual carbon footprint and encourage friends, family & neighbours to do the same, as this will have a positive impact on air quality.

## **Air Quality – Model Motion**

*This Council notes that:*

1. Poor air quality is a deadly symptom of climate change, which is largely made by human activity and disproportionately affects vulnerable people and those living in urban areas. It is causing an environmental and public health crisis;
2. The health impacts of poor air quality include an increased risk of lung cancer and cardiovascular disease, and in pregnancy it can have a detrimental effect on foetal lung development. The Royal College of Physicians estimated that the annual cost of health problems arising from exposure to air pollution in the UK exceeds £20 billion. This includes costs to society and business, health services and individuals who are affected;
3. The UK has failed to meet continuing air quality targets set by the EU, with a number of areas in the UK, particularly in town centres, regularly breaching Nitrogen Dioxide limits. The UK is obliged under international treaties to meet air quality targets, but the legislation comes from the EU. The government has said that they are committed to this legislation after Britain leaves the EU;
4. Local government is leading the way in tackling poor air quality in their towns and cities. This includes:
  - the introduction of a Zero Emissions Zone by Oxford City Council;
  - Newham Council's approach of pursuing a sustainable growth agenda which includes tackling poor air quality in the borough;
  - Investing in electric vehicles – Harrow Council have replaced old council vehicles with electric vehicles and will gradually phase petrol vehicles out, and Bradford Council are introducing EV charging points across the borough to encourage residents and businesses to switch to electric vehicles;
  - Taking action to clean up transport – Southampton City Council are cleaning up their bus fleet and encouraging taxi drivers to invest in greener vehicles, & Plymouth City Council is investing in cycling infrastructure and Stockport Council are improving public realm infrastructure to encourage more people to make journeys by public transport, foot and bike.
5. That the LGA Labour Group has put together a Climate Emergency website – [www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com](http://www.lgalabourclimateemergency.com) – which is a home for best practice, case studies, campaign resources and much more for Labour in local government;
6. The government needs to be clear about their plans for tackling air quality. Councils have lost 60p in every £1 since 2010, and for councils to be able to tackle air quality the government needs to restore local government funding to 2010 levels over the next four years. The government also needs to take a joined-up approach to tackling air quality, with government departments being consistent in their message and support to councils about tackling poor air quality;
7. That air quality in XXX area is breaching recommended limits, and that XXX council must take action to tackle it.

*This Council resolves to:*

1. Campaign against poor air quality, alongside local residents and with other campaign groups in the local area;
2. Take the following steps to tackle poor air quality in XXX:
  - Investigate the feasibility of implementing a Clean Air Zone in XXX with the aim of improving air quality in XXX;

- Invest in the council fleet to make sure that vehicles meet high environmental standards, including investing in electric vehicles and charging points;
  - Work with transport providers in XXX, including taxi drivers and bus companies to ensure that public transport in XXX meets high environmental standards, and investigate ways of doing this through the licencing system and additional funding streams;
  - Work with residents and visitors to encourage them to make journeys by public transport, bike and foot where possible, and carry out improvements to infrastructure and the public realm to help make this happen.
3. Contact and work with other councils to learn from their work to tackle poor air quality;
  4. Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, to ask that councils receive proper funding for tackling air quality, and that government departments provide a coordinated and joined up approach when working with councils who are tackling poor air quality.

**DRAFT PRESS RELEASE**

**September 2019**

**For immediate release**

Contact XXXX for media enquiries

## **XXXXX Council pledges radical action to tackle poor air quality**

XXX Council has passed a motion at their Full Council meeting pledging to take radical action to tackle poor air quality in XXX. The pledged action on air quality will include taking steps to introduce a Clean Air Zone in XXX to improve air quality, investing in XXX Council's fleet to ensure that it meets the highest environmental standards, installing charging points for electric vehicles to encourage more residents and businesses to invest in electric vehicles, work with taxi drivers and bus companies to clean up the local taxi and bus fleet, and work with residents to encourage them to use public transport, cycle and walk more, with XXX Council committing to improve public realm and infrastructure to facilitate this.

Poor air quality is a deadly symptom of climate change, which is largely made by human activity and disproportionately affects vulnerable people and those living in urban areas, including XXX. The health impacts of poor air quality include an increased risk of lung cancer and cardiovascular disease, and in pregnancy it can have a detrimental effect on foetal lung development. The Royal College of Physicians estimated that the annual cost of health problems arising from exposure to air pollution in the UK exceeds £20 billion. This includes costs to society and business, health services and individuals who are affected. Local councils are ideally placed to tackle poor air quality as they know the needs of their areas best and can work closely with residents and businesses to address this issue.

XXX, Leader of XXX Council said:

“Poor air quality is affecting the health of residents and visitors alike across XXX and as a council we are determined to tackle it. Taking practical steps such as investing in cleaner transport and improving infrastructure for cycling and walking will make a big difference to air quality in XXX, and this action is not a moment too soon. I look forward to working with residents and businesses to improve air quality in XXX, making it a cleaner and healthier place to live”

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