

The City of London Corporation's Climate Action Strategy 2020

September 2020

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Executive summary

This document sets out the City of London Corporation's Climate Action Strategy for 2020 onwards. It explains the importance of climate action to the achievement of the economic, societal and environmental outcomes described in our Corporate Plan, 2018-23, and why we need to act now.

It describes our rigorous approach, our strategic aims, the actions we will take over the first six years and how we will ensure it underpins all decision-making by the City Corporation.

The headlines

Through this strategy, the City Corporation will:

- Achieve net zero¹ by 2027 in the City Corporation's operations
- Achieve net zero by 2040 across the City Corporation's full value chain
- Achieve net zero by 2040 in the Square Mile
- Achieve climate resilience² in our buildings, public spaces and infrastructure

At the City Corporation we will do this through major investment in:

- Improving energy efficiency in investment and corporate properties
- Aligning our investment portfolio with the Paris Agreement³
- Enhancing carbon removal⁴ in our open spaces
- Protecting our shared natural resources
- Driving net zero through our supply chain
- Integrating climate considerations into all our decisions

Across the Square Mile we will:

- Work with all stakeholder groups to accelerate the transition to net zero
- Support SMEs⁵ to reach net zero
- Mitigate climate-related risks

^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5} See Glossary at Page 16

Who we are

The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile, dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally-successful UK.

The Square Mile is the historic centre of London and is home to the 'City' – the financial and commercial heart of the UK. Our reach extends far beyond the Square Mile's boundaries and across private, public and charitable and community sector responsibilities. This, along with our independent and non-party political voice and convening power, enables us to promote the interests of people and organisations across London and the UK and play a valued role on the world-stage.

What we can do

In the context of climate action, this means we can support the achievement of net zero, build climate resilience and champion sustainable growth to achieve a truly sustainable City. We will do this by means of the following actions, committed to in our [Corporate Plan, 2018-23](#), against which we drive our performance.

We will...

1. Support the achievement of net zero by...

- Influencing UK and global policy and regulation and international agreements to protect the environment.
- Providing environmental stewardship and advocacy, in use of resources, emissions, conservation, greening, biodiversity and access to nature.
- Providing a clean environment and driving down the negative effects of our own activities.

2. Build climate resilience by...

- Preparing our response to natural and man-made threats by strengthening, protecting and adapting our infrastructure directly and by influencing others.
- Protecting consumers and users of buildings, streets and public spaces.
- Providing thriving and biodiverse green spaces and urban habitats.

3. Champion sustainable growth by...

- Providing world-class spaces for business and markets to thrive.
- Modelling new ways of delivering inclusive and sustainable growth.
- Supporting organisations in pioneering, preparing for and responding to changes in regulations, markets, products and ways of working.
- Supporting, celebrating and advocating for responsible practices and investments.

Why us? Why now?

The City of London Corporation's core purpose is to promote the long-term interests of the City, and thereby support the UK's economy. We have long been champions of sustainability. We were the first local government body to introduce a smokeless zone, two years ahead of the Clean Air Act (1954), and to develop a climate change adaptation strategy (2010). More recently, we have supported the growth of the UK's green finance sector.

Scientific evidence tells us that the climate is already changing and that we need to act now if we are to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, thereby avoiding the more extreme effects of climate change. This means we must commit to achieving net zero and to ensuring that the Square Mile, and our assets outside it, are resilient to more extreme weather events. Acting now is not only the right and responsible thing to do, it is key both to securing and advancing our global market position as a financial centre. It will also ensure the competitiveness of our buildings, investment properties and public spaces as attractive places to work, live, study and visit, both now and in the future.

We do not need to compromise the economy to fix the environment - in reality, climate action will drive growth and jobs. In order to remain relevant and commercially viable, we need to be responsible and resilient. What used to be 'green finance' is fast becoming the only option for the financial and professional services sector. Integrating climate risks and opportunities into all decision-making is similarly becoming the new normal.

In developing this strategy, we have focused on achieving best practice with an evidence-based approach, the breadth of emission sources we include and the range of physical risks we address. Founded on science-based targets, rather than simply a call to action, our Climate Action Strategy aims to ensure that the Square Mile and City Corporation make a positive contribution to tackling climate change, are resilient to the risks it poses, and seize the opportunities presented by the transition to a net zero economy.

This is one of the defining cross-City Corporation policy approaches supporting delivery of our Corporate Plan, 2018-23. But we cannot do this alone. This strategy sets out how we will work in partnership with City stakeholders to develop the solutions to tackle climate change and build back better following the pandemic, making sure no one is left behind. We invite you to work with us as we adapt our physical and financial assets so that our society can flourish for decades to come.

[Insert photo and signature]

[Insert photo and signature]

The Rt Hon. The Lord Mayor,
Alderman William Russell

Catherine McGuinness
Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee

Our approach

As stated above, we cannot fulfil our ambitions alone. This means we must demonstrate robust climate action ourselves and share our methodology with, and learn from, others on this journey. So, in developing this strategy, we have focused on achieving best practice with our evidence-based approach, the breadth of emission sources we include, the range of physical risks we will address, embedding climate action in everything we do and working within the latest targets and advice.

Our evidence base

This strategy brings together numerous related City Corporation strategies, policies and campaigns – from our Local Plan and Responsible Business Strategy through to our Clean City Awards – and builds on the momentum, progress and lessons learned so far. See the ‘Our baseline’ section for more information on achievements to date.

To understand how far we had come already and what is left to do, we commissioned expert advice on our current and future resilience levels, carbon emissions and capacity for removing carbon from the atmosphere. We followed the leading global standards and best-practice guidelines in developing our approach.

We explored resilience risks with the sectors and organisations that our economic growth is built upon, from utilities and transport providers through to financial and professional services and our cultural sector. Together, we identified what is needed for the Square Mile to continue to compete successfully in the face of climate change. And we asked the public how important climate action is to them, what they would like to see happen and what they would be willing to do themselves - three-quarters of respondents said climate change should be extremely important to us.

Together, this provided the evidence base upon which we built our action plan and the data we need to set and track stretching but achievable targets, and test and learn as we go. It also means that rather than picking one date as our net zero target, we have identified separate targets for the Square Mile, the City Corporation and types of emissions to ensure we deliver as much as possible, as soon as possible.

The breadth of emission sources we include

Many organisations and authorities focus on driving down the emissions they have most control over – scope 1 and 2. Addressing scope 3 can be daunting as it covers everything an organisation buys, sells, invests in, leases to others and disposes of as well as commuting and business travel. But for organisations and financial centres like ours, scope 3 makes up a large portion of the total carbon footprint – and measuring it can lead to the design of innovative solutions to reduce carbon emissions significantly.

We have included scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions to take ownership, show leadership and help make this standard practice. This can make it appear that we are greater emitters than our peers that have not included as full a picture of scope 3 in their data. We will continue to enhance our understanding of scope 3 data with our partners and keep advocating standardisation of reporting to ensure everyone addresses their total carbon footprint effectively.

Turning risks into opportunities

Whatever action we and others take, we still need to prepare for hotter drier summers, warmer wetter winters, stronger winds, more frequent extreme weather events and rising sea levels. As we do this, we will go beyond mitigation and seize opportunities to deliver social, economic and environmental outcomes that mean that everyone benefits from the action we take.

[Here we will use an infographic showing the range of risks we address and how risks can become opportunities:

- Risks to health, wellbeing and productivity from high temperatures
- Risk of shortages in the public water supply
- Flooding of communities, businesses and infrastructure
- Risks to natural capital⁶, including terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity
- Threats to food production and trade
- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals

- Fewer people living in fuel poverty
- Benefits to health, wellbeing and productivity from climate action
- More and better space for people and nature, including urban biodiversity
- A resilient global business environment in the face of climate impacts
- Benefits over other global financial centres which will face more extreme challenges
- Job creation
- Reductions in insurance premiums and support for the City's Insurance sector
- Reduction in unnecessary use of resources (water, food) and generation of waste and use of natural capital (greening rather than air conditioning to reduce temperatures)]

Factoring climate action into everything we do

Reinforcing and building on the commitments we made in our Corporate Plan (2018-23) and to make sure we are doing all we can to reach our goals, we commit to:

- Working with our stakeholders and partners and listening to their ideas, experiences and views
- Ensuring that vulnerable groups who are most likely to be impacted by climate change are prioritised in our decision-making
- Identifying measurable targets to track performance against our goals
- Keeping our actions and targets in line with changing legislation and recommendations (see next section for more details)
- Accessing the best evidence of our impact possible so we can learn, share our experience and hone our actions as we go
- Embedding a climate lens into all our decision-making
- Monitoring progress against our targets at regular intervals
- Reporting publicly to our committees and via published annual reports
- Reviewing and refreshing the action plan every five years

⁶ See Glossary on Page 16

How we complement others' efforts

This strategy has been developed to support the delivery of the Paris Climate Agreement (2015) and our obligations under the UK Climate Change Act (amended 2019), which has enshrined in law both a target of net zero emissions by 2050 and measures for climate adaptation (improved resilience). It is complementary to London-wide and national efforts to reduce emissions and improve the resilience of our communities and urban spaces.

Crucially this includes the draft London Plan, the Greater London Authority's London City Resilience Strategy 2020, the UK Committee on Climate Change Climate Risk Assessment 2017 and National Adaptation Programme, as well as the landscape of policies set out by government and advice from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Our baseline [using mainly infographics]

Supporting the achievement of net zero

The City Corporation has achieved a 19% reduction in energy consumption within our operational sites since 2008 (using data from 2018/19). Since 2018 100% of the electricity we have purchased has been renewable.

We bought six new electric vehicles and eight new hybrid vehicles in 2018/19 and in 2019/20 installed 20 new electric vehicle charging points as part of the City's "Transition to a Zero Emission Fleet" policy.

The Square Mile has achieved a 55% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions since 2008 (using data from 2018/19). This has been assisted by our ambitious planning requirements which have led to 75% of new commercial developments with over 20,000m² floorspace achieving at least a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating since 2014.

Where the City Corporation's emissions come from

Where the Square Mile's emissions come from

How we remove carbon from the atmosphere

We look after over 11,000 acres of green spaces across London and its green belt. This equates to approximately 5,500 football pitches. This natural capital not only provides valued space for people and nature but also currently removes **16 ktCO₂⁷** per year. This is equivalent to 40% of the City Corporation's scope 1 and 2 emissions.

Building resilience

The City Corporation has long used its planning powers to implement a range of resilience measures in the Square Mile. These include green roofs, urban greening, landscaping, flood resilience and climate resilient new buildings.

As of 2020, the Square Mile has 42,600m² of green roof, up from 11,200 m² in 2005. This is set to increase to 65,800m² by 2024 through planning permissions in the current pipeline.

Championing sustainable growth

The UK is the only global financial centre that is also a leading centre for green finance, topping both conventional and 'green' rankings. UK market players are committed to sustainable principles and the regulatory context is both favourable and innovative. The London Stock Exchange is the 'greenest' main stock exchange across all global financial centres. The UK was the first government to adopt a Green Finance Strategy, which was launched at the Guildhall alongside the Green Finance Institute. The UK is best placed to produce talent that is trained and skilled in sustainability matters. This places us well to lead and support other economies as they transition to net zero.

⁷ See Glossary on Page 16

Our climate vision, aims and goals

Our vision

The City of London is responsible, sustainable and competitive.

Our aims

- 1) To support the achievement of net zero
- 2) To build climate resilience
- 3) To champion sustainable growth.

Our goals

For the City of London Corporation

- A. City of London Corporation scope 1 and 2 emissions are net zero by 2027 and scope 3 emissions are net zero by 2040⁸.
- B. The City of London Corporation and its assets are resilient to climate change.
- C. The City of London Corporation supports UK and overseas organisations to become climate responsible.

For the Square Mile's fabric and function

- D. The Square Mile's scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions (BASIC+ definition) are net zero by 2040.
- E. The Square Mile's buildings, public spaces and infrastructure are resilient to climate change.

For society

- F. People in the Square Mile and beyond benefit from a clean, green and safe environment and job creation.

The first six years

Our actions and targets build upon our Responsible Business Strategy (2018 - 23) – “Towards a Sustainable Future” and our ongoing work in supporting innovation and growth in the financial and professional services sector.

Implementation of this strategy starts in April 2021. The actions and impact measures set out in the next three sections relate to the first six years of the strategy – **up to 31 March 2027**.

⁸ The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) requires inclusion of at least two thirds of the City Corporation's value chain (scope 3) emissions in its target boundary (SBTi, Science-Based Target Setting Manual, April 2020)

Actions to support the achievement of net zero

Our goals are...	Actions we will take are...	We will assess our impact by measuring...
A City of London Corporation scope 1 and 2 emissions are net zero by 2027 and scope 3 emissions are net zero by 2040	<p>Transform the energy efficiency of our operational buildings through the adoption of best available technologies</p> <p>Maximise the use of renewable energy sources across our operational buildings</p> <p>Introduce new land management practices across our open spaces aiming to maximise their ability to remove carbon, and optimise their biodiversity and resilience value</p> <p>Align our financial investment portfolio with the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change</p> <p>Embed circular economy⁹ principles into our capital projects and reducing carbon intensity by using life cycle carbon and cost assessment techniques and design specifications</p> <p>Accelerate the move to net zero carbon and energy efficient tenanted buildings, working closely with tenants to achieve shared goals</p> <p>Strengthen our requirements and supplier engagement to drive performance and innovation in delivering sustainable products and solutions</p>	<p>The energy and carbon intensity of our operational portfolio (kWh per m² and tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per m², volume of fugitive gas emissions)</p> <p>Total consumption of energy by the City Corporation from renewable sources (kWh)</p> <p>Amount of carbon storage and sequestration annually against Climate Action Plan targets and increasing ecological monitoring to assess biodiversity condition</p> <p>% of investment portfolio aligned with the Paris Agreement, below 2 degrees ambition</p> <p>Energy efficiency per m² according to archetype and embodied carbon (tonnes) thresholds, and measurement of sustainability and circular economy criteria met</p> <p>% of supply (by £) with Paris-aligned net zero plans</p> <p>% reduction in carbon intensity of top 25 contracts according to highest spend, emissions and leverage, compared to 2018/19</p>
D. The Square Mile's scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions (BASIC+ definition) are net zero by 2040	<p>Work with businesses and organisations to develop a Climate Action Fund to improve the energy efficiency of buildings in Square Mile</p> <p>Develop a Square Mile renewable energy strategy to support others to transition to renewable energy</p>	<p>Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent reduced from Square Mile buildings</p> <p>Total consumption of energy by Square Mile buildings from renewable sources (kWh)</p>

⁹ See Glossary on Page 16

	<p>Use our planning role to influence others to embed carbon analysis and circular economy principles in capital projects</p> <p>Advocate the importance of green spaces and urban greening as natural carbon sinks¹⁰, and their contribution to biodiversity and overall wellbeing</p> <p>Support organisations in the Square Mile to build circular, low-carbon¹¹ and resilient supply chains</p> <p>Provide tailored support to SMEs on their decarbonisation journeys</p> <p>Increase engagement and communications about sustainability with residents, businesses, visitors and other stakeholders</p>	<p>% of low-carbon and circular buildings (to be defined) in existing stock and new builds</p> <p>The City of London's natural capital value in terms of ecosystem services¹², and critical role in climate change mitigation, wellbeing and reversing biodiversity and natural habitat degradation</p> <p>% of Square Mile businesses committed to transition to low-carbon and resilient supply chains</p> <p>% of SMEs assisted in advancing net zero commitments and plans</p>
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^{10, 10, 11} See Glossary at Page 16

Actions to build climate resilience

Our goals are...	Actions we will take are...	We will assess our impact by measuring...
<p>B. The City of London Corporation and its assets are resilient to climate change</p>	<p>Build on our existing work to develop an early warning system, and clear resilience strategies for pests and diseases across our ports and markets, driving down the climate related food security risks</p> <p>Embed resilience measures into our upgrade plans for our owned and operated buildings</p> <p>Upskill our workforce on climate resilience</p> <p>Embed a climate resilience lens into all our decision-making</p>	<p>Open Spaces management of current and anticipated biosecurity risks (annual report on specific pest and diseases)</p> <p>Resilience measures incorporated into building refurbishments and major projects</p>
<p>E. The Square Mile's buildings, public spaces and infrastructure are resilient to climate change</p>	<p>Make the Square Mile public realm more climate change ready through adding in more green spaces, urban greening, flood resistant road surfaces, adaptable planting regimes and heat resistant materials</p> <p>Reduce the risk of flooding through developing sustainable rain and surface water management policies, resulting in a connected system of water recycling, sustainable urban draining and rainwater management measures</p> <p>Strengthen our planning guidance on climate resilience measures for new developments</p> <p>Work with our partners to create a more climate resilient and diversified energy network across the Square Mile</p> <p>Develop a strong, data-led approach to deepen our understanding of climate related risks and mitigations across the Square Mile</p> <p>Ensure that we continue to protect the residents, critical assets, infrastructure and heritage of the Square Mile</p>	<p>Attractiveness ratings of workers, residents, visitors and students and monitoring local conditions in public spaces, e.g. temperature</p> <p>Volume of rainwater attenuated through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems implementation in the City</p> <p>The effectiveness of flood alleviation management works on Open Spaces' water bodies and the impact on the wider urban environment</p> <p>Number of pre-application discussions which cover climate resilience measures</p> <p>Sub national energy consumption for the City</p> <p>Periodic review of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and climate resilience adaptive pathways</p> <p>Number and location of flooding incidents</p>

Actions to champion sustainable growth

Our goals are...	Actions we will take are...	We will assess our impact by measuring...
<p>C. The City of London Corporation supports UK and overseas organisations to become climate responsible</p>	<p>Mobilise capital into Sustainable Finance</p> <p>Secure the UK and London's place as a leader for investment in Sustainable Finance products</p> <p>Help faster development and adoption of Sustainable Finance products and services</p> <p>Share best practice on standards, tools, platforms and expertise to facilitate green and sustainable investment and growth</p> <p>Encourage global movement towards disclosure and production of credible transition plans as the norm</p> <p>Foster an ambition to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 or sooner for UK based financial and professional services firms</p> <p>Join other investors working through development and implementation of net zero transition action plans</p> <p>Support Financial institutions committing to net zero in the 2040s or by 2050 at the latest, covering all emissions, including scope 3 and where data allows reliable measurement</p> <p>Support charities and SMEs to consider, prepare for and lead response to climate change</p> <p>Promote responsible procurement and investment practices for both asset managers and owners</p> <p>Enhance the UK/London's capacity to finance sustainable investment opportunities globally including emerging markets</p>	<p>Value of green and sustainable bonds issuance & trading at London Stock Exchange</p> <p>UK based signatories to implement robust disclosures in line with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)</p> <p>London Stock Exchange sustainability disclosure rate</p> <p>Z/Yen's latest Global Green Finance Index report</p> <p>Number of listed firms in the UK who have published transition to net zero</p> <p>Results of Climate Stress Tests</p> <p>Sustainable listings on the London Stock Exchange AIM Market</p> <p>Adoption of leading sustainability reporting standards and frameworks</p>

	<p>Work with financial services sector and UK Government to promote and scale sustainable finance products and services that countries and corporates need to help them transition to net zero</p> <p>Influence and support the delivery of technical solutions to increase comparability of data and ease of reporting</p> <p>Share learning and best practice about the challenges and opportunities of our net zero journey</p>	
F. People in the Square Mile and beyond benefit from a clean, green and safe environment and job creation	<p>Address existing inequalities and ensuring no one is left behind</p> <p>Prepare people for jobs of the future</p> <p>Facilitate collaborative action on air pollution in London</p> <p>Reduce pollution and increase the resilience of the Square Mile</p> <p>Implement our ambitious air quality and transport strategies</p> <p>Embrace circular economy principles across our strategies and work</p> <p>Work with our creative and educational sector partners to deliver sustainable initiatives</p> <p>Enhance greening and biodiversity across our public realm and open spaces</p>	<p>% of the Square Mile to reach World Health Organisation compliance for nitrogen dioxide</p> <p>Energy performance of residential buildings</p> <p>Number of firms in the Square Mile engaged in Responsible Business initiatives</p> <p>Visitor satisfaction levels for Square Mile and open spaces</p> <p>% change annually in conversion to zero emission vehicle fleet</p> <p>Urban Greening Factor for the City's public realm schemes</p> <p>The effects of urban greening on issues such as 'heat island'</p> <p>% by area of central London open spaces converted to wildlife refuges annually</p>

Glossary

BASIC+ definition emissions include those from within the Square Mile from stationary energy, transportation and waste, as well as transboundary transportation, industrial processes and product use and the agriculture, forestry and land use sectors. It does not include emissions from investments.

Carbon removal is the process by which a **carbon sink**, such as forestry, reduces the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Circular economy means keeping resources in use for as long as possible, extracting the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recovering and regenerating products and materials at the end of each service life.

Climate resilience is the ability to anticipate, prepare for and respond to hazardous events, trends or disturbances related to climate (Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions).

Ecosystem services are benefits to humans from the natural environment and from healthy ecosystems.

GHGs means greenhouse gases - the emissions responsible for global warming. These include methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases amongst others.

ktCO₂ is the unit of measurement for GHG emissions. It standardises greenhouse gases into units of kilo-tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (ktCO₂e).

A **low-carbon economy** is simply an economy that causes low levels of GHG emissions compared with today's carbon-intensive economy. 'Carbon' refers to carbon dioxide, the GHG which contributes the most to climate change. The low-carbon economy can be seen as a step in the process towards a zero-carbon economy. (Science Direct)

Natural capital refers to the stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms.

Net zero emissions are achieved when anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere are balanced by anthropogenic removals over a specified period (Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) and CDP, Towards a science-based approach to climate neutrality in the corporate sector, September 2019). N.B. Further guidance on the definition of net zero and its guiding principles are due later in 2020 from the SBTi.

Science-based / Paris-aligned (Science-Based Target Setting Manual, April 2020) GHG emissions reduction targets are considered "science-based" if they are in line with what the latest climate science says is necessary to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement 2015 - to limit global warming to well-below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.

SMEs refers to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Scopes 1, 2 and 3:

For an organisation: (Defra Environmental Reporting Guidelines and the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard, revised edition)

Scope 1 (direct) means emissions from activities owned or controlled by your organisation that release emissions into the atmosphere. They are direct emissions. Examples of Scope 1 emissions include emissions from combustion in owned or controlled boilers, furnaces, vehicles, emissions from chemical production in owned or controlled process equipment.

Scope 2 (energy indirect) means emissions released into the atmosphere associated with your consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling. These are indirect emissions that are a consequence of your organisation's activities, but which occur at sources you do not own or control

Scope 3 (other indirect) means emissions that are a consequence of your actions, which occur at sources which you do not own or control and which are not classed as Scope 2 emissions. Examples of Scope 3 emissions are business travel by means not owned or controlled by your organisation, waste disposal which is not owned or controlled, or purchased materials.

For a city (GHG Protocol, Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories):

Scope 1 Scope 1 means GHG emissions from sources located within the city boundary

Scope 2 means GHG emissions occurring as a consequence of the use of grid-supplied electricity, heat, steam and/or cooling within the city boundary

Scope 3 means all other GHG emissions that occur outside the city boundary as a result of activities taking place within the city boundary