

GREATER LONDON MAYORAL MANIFESTO

**A Manifesto Delivering
Sustainable Growth**



Foreword

In May, voters across England will elect 10 metro mayors, the most to date. By May 3 approximately 26 million people, or 44 per cent of the English population will be presided over by a mayor. And in May, another three mayors will be elected for the first time, in the North East¹, York and North Yorkshire, and the East Midlands. This combined group of Metro Mayors (the M12) will then collectively represent more than 50 per cent of England's GDP.

With a strong personal mandate, mayors provide a powerful and influential voice, bringing a strategic regional view to crucial policy decisions on areas such as transport, housing, education, strategic planning and infrastructure. All of which are crucial to business. Across England, we see mayors continue to play a vital role in ensuring a region is an attractive place for inward investment and to do business, both domestically and internationally.

The CBI has been a long standing supporter of devolution and of directly elected mayors; we have seen how they can be strong advocates for their region with convening power to make things happen. They act as ambassadors for their regions both nationally and internationally, and importantly, provide the governance and accountability Whitehall needs in order to devolve powers and funding.

Regional priorities for devolution

The success of London is pivotal to the success of the country, with our capital's economy helping to generate opportunity across every UK region and nation. As an engine of prosperity, creativity, and innovation, London's standing is essential to the UK's global reputation and future competitiveness. And today, it has a vital role to play in the most pressing issues facing our economy and society.

Our nation's capital, London, must be empowered to ensure it has the tools necessary to compete with its international peers, including Paris, New York and Tokyo. To better equip London to compete internationally, the CBI recommends that the next mayor pledges to work with Government to advance the objective of realising a "trailblazer" devolution settlement, akin to the deals recently agreed with both West Midlands and Greater Manchester Combined Authorities. This would provide greater fiscal autonomy and longer-term funding certainty.

Looking ahead to a new era of devolution, the CBI has also identified five key policy priorities for a newly elected mayor that will help safeguard the region as great place in which live, work and do business.

- Driving regional investment
- Future-proofing the regional labour market to drive inclusive growth
- Driving regional climate commitments to help the UK deliver net zero
- Driving high-growth technology and innovation

1 ¹ The North East Mayoral Combined Authority will replace the non-mayoral North East Combined Authority and the North of Tyne Combined Authority, whose incumbent mayor is Jamie Driscoll

- Delivering resilient public services

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Drive regional investment

The forthcoming mayoral election provides an ideal opportunity for each candidate to outline a compelling case for the business community, both domestically and internationally, to continue to invest in the capital. Each candidate will have a platform to present a vision for the capital which clearly demonstrates what makes London a great place in which to live, work and do business. To achieve this, the CBI recommends that each candidate presents an investment prospectus outlining how they would retain and attract business investment to the capital – after all, businesses also contribute to the Greater London Authority’s annual budget².

To further drive regional investment, we recommend that the incoming mayor:

- Seeks to work with the 12 English regional mayors in the spirit of collaboration to act as a powerful collective voice for regional opportunities and challenges. This would align with Lord Harrington’s 2023 report to government which suggested “A need for collaboration over competition”³, citing the importance of regions, and mayoral combined authorities working in partnership to land investment into the UK.
- Commits to working collectively with M12 Group of Metro Mayors, to deliver a Mayoral Economic Commitment through partnership between the Office for Investment and the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities. This will elevate the international standing of mayors throughout England and their role in the UK’s global pitch for investment.

Future proof the regional labour market to drive inclusive growth

Great strides have been made since the formation of the Greater London Authority to tackle skills shortages and to help future-proof the capital’s labour market. The development of the London Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), the devolved Adult Education Budget, and Skills Bootcamps are among the examples being used to help future-proof London’s labour market.

To further future proof London’s labour market and drive inclusive growth, we recommend that the next mayor:

- Ensures the GLA maximises the devolved Adult Education Budget, so it continues to meet the evolving needs of London’s business community and equips learners with the skills they need to secure employment in growing sectors of the economy.
- Joins the CBI and our members in our calls for Government to reform the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) by turning it into a tripartite body, with representatives

2 [The Mayor’s budget | London City Hall](#): The Mayor of London’s Budget 2024-25

3 [The Harrington Review of Foreign Direct Investment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#): The Lord Harrington Review of Foreign Direct Investment

from across the UK, including regional mayors. The Committee's revised remit would include mapping shortages and advising the government on action to address them across the economy. The reformed committee could play a key role in the newly created labour shortages strategy. And this would also help ensure the skills needs of each region are taken into consideration when making its recommendations to government.

- Commits the GLA to continuing to work alongside the CBI and London's other Employer Representative Bodies to ensure the success of the London LSIP, and that it continues to reflect the evolving needs of business.
- Makes the most of London's unique and abundant ecosystem of further and higher education institutions that collectively supply skills and qualifications. The next mayor can build on these existing partnerships, ensure there is ongoing dialogue that is evidence based, and foster close collaboration to direct funding from devolved skills budgets effectively and efficiently.

Regional climate commitments to help the UK deliver net zero

Increasingly, mayors are playing a more prominent role on the international stage, promoting inward investment, strengthening ties with other countries and sharing best practice with their counterparts. This is exemplified in the role the Mayor of London plays as chair of C40 Cities⁴ which brings together mayors across the globe to address climate change.

To help ensure London's climate commitments contribute to the UK delivery of net zero, the CBI recommends that the next mayor

- Maximises devolved powers to work towards the goal of making London a net-zero carbon city by 2030, including a commitment to maintain the expanded ultra-low emission zone.
- Commit to continuing to work with C40 Cities to help foster a unified effort in combating climate change.
- Utilises the mayor's extensive powers over public transport in the capital to commit to ensuring London's bus fleet is all electric.
- Commits to working alongside owners/landlords to accelerate the retrofit of commercial buildings to help support capital become a net zero carbon city⁵.

Drive high-growth technology and innovation

4 [Mayor Sadiq Khan, C40 co-chair - C40 Cities](#)

5 [Mayor and London Councils hold retrofit summit | London City Hall](#)

London plays host to several globally significant economic clusters such as the Knowledge Quarter around King's Cross, a key cluster for tech and AI, life sciences and health⁶, attracting some of the world's leading healthcare and tech companies. London is also buttressed by two world-leading tech and innovation ecosystems, namely Level39 and Silicon Roundabout.

The capital is also home to many of the world's leading educational institutions. All of which help to create the right environment for innovation and entrepreneurship. These institutions also act as a beacon for aspiring international students who come to the capital to enhance their career prospects and take advantage of London's world-class educational facilities.

To help drive high-growth technology and innovation, we recommend:

- The next mayor, using their convening power, commits to bringing together investment and pension funds, along with the British Business Bank, universities, Innovate UK and industry to explore the potential to develop new funding streams, to help high-growth start-up and scale-ups access the finance they need.

Delivery of resilient public services and fit for purpose infrastructure

London's public services have faced a multitude of challenges since the last mayoral election in 2021, including COVID19 and its lasting impact on the health service, an overall decline in passengers using public transport, climate related events, and changing demographics – all of which are placing greater strains on public services, and infrastructure across the capital.

To help deliver resilient public services and fit for purpose infrastructure, we recommend that the next Mayor of London:

- Commits to reviewing the London City Resilience Strategy⁷ to ensure its robustness and that it reflects the needs of the city going forward.
- Collaborates with other Mayoral Combined Authorities to establish standardised procurement frameworks that prioritise openness, transparency, and inclusivity. These frameworks should enable small and medium (SMEs) and local employers to actively participate in the contract bidding. This could be achieved through working in partnership with the M12 Group of Metro Mayors.
- Commits to working with government to bring about a long-term financial settlement for Transport for London, drawing on evidence of the success of the agreements already in place with National Highways, Network Rail and the City Regional Sustainability Settlements in place with eight city regions across England.

6 [London: A data and AI innovation hub - MedCity \(medcityhq.com\)](#)

7 [London City Resilience Strategy | London City Hall](#): London City Resilience Strategy

Conclusion

The CBI is committed to working alongside the next mayor of London to help drive sustainable economic growth. The CBI contends that when politicians, public and private sectors collaborate, London can unlock its full potential. Therefore, our members based in the capital, and the business community stand ready to play their part in this agenda and take forward the priorities within this manifesto. London's many strengths and formidable assets are undisputed, yet there are hurdles outlined in this manifesto which need to be overcome if the capital is to maintain its international competitiveness.

The nation's capital can and must play its part in delivering sustainable economic growth, which will benefit not only the region, but the whole of the United Kingdom. To help achieve this, the next mayor must commit to working in partnership with the M12 Group of Metro Mayors, who collectively using their convening powers, can form an effective alliance for growth – and the CBI also stands ready to play its part in supporting this Group in this endeavour.

In partnership with other business organisations, we will be supporting a mayoral hustings where candidates can share and put forward their vision for the future of London's economy.

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To share your views on this topic or ask us a question, contact:

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