

Mayor and London Councils hold retrofit summit

4 years ago



The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and Cllr Georgia Gould, Chair of London Councils, will today bring together business leaders and Londoners to discuss the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, reduce bills and tackle fuel poverty.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI), London First, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and New London Architecture (NLA) will join the Mayor and London Councils in a [‘call to action’](#) to London’s businesses to decarbonise existing buildings. Industrial and commercial emissions make up one third of London’s emissions, meaning businesses in the capital have a pivotal role to play in reaching net zero.

The London Greener and Warmer Buildings Summit is a crucial opportunity for those responsible for greening London’s existing buildings, from domestic, commercial and public sectors to figure out ways to rapidly accelerate building improvements across the city, at an ever-greater scale. All partners will need to work much closer together, and this Summit will help to build the partnership.

The Summit will set out the importance and benefits of ambitious retrofit, refurbishing a building to make it more efficient and better for the environment, in the capital and showcase practical examples from homes, businesses and the public sector. Londoners will also take part in the virtual summit.

A recent YouGov poll commissioned by City Hall revealed there’s work to be done to engage Londoners on these essential changes, with 71 per cent of Londoners polled¹ not understanding or not having heard the term ‘retrofit’. When those who have heard about retrofit² were asked if the following statements were true or false, 78 per cent said they think it will reduce their energy bills, make their homes warmer (80 per

cent) and help fight climate change (74 per cent), however, 72 per cent said they think it's expensive and 61 per cent feel it is difficult or inconvenient.

The Mayor has set out ambitious plans to make the city net zero carbon by 2030. All 33 London local authorities have agreed seven climate targets, including the retrofitting of all London homes to an average EPC B rating by 2030.

Sadiq is determined to support businesses by expanding his Business Climate Challenge – which supports businesses on the path to net zero – to reach up to 250 businesses in the next year. The programme is developed in partnership with Bloomberg Associates, who are working with the Mayor to offer free expert advice and support.

As of 2020, housing is the greatest contributor to London's greenhouse gas emissions, and in order to meet London's climate goal by 2030, virtually all existing homes will need upgrading to improve energy efficiency and switch to low-carbon heating.

As well as helping to avoid catastrophic climate change, improving buildings will help to tackle the rising cost-of-living crisis. Energy prices will increase by 54 per cent from April*, meaning this year London households alone will spend an estimated £6 billion on energy bills, nearly double what they were paying two years ago.

Meanwhile, 15 per cent of London households are already in fuel poverty, with this set to worsen over the coming year. Currently, Barking & Dagenham and Newham have the highest levels of fuel poverty in England.

The Summit comes after the London boroughs published their comprehensive, first-of-its-kind, action plan for retrofitting London's 3.5 million homes in October 2021, which set out a shared set of principles and actions to galvanise collective action among the boroughs to support retrofit across all housing tenures. The boroughs, working with other Core Cities across the United Kingdom, have also initiated the UK Cities Climate Investment Commission to try and leverage widescale private investment into green initiatives, including retrofit.

The Mayor recently published his pathway to net zero, bringing his target forward 20 years from 2050 to 2030. This work shows both the scale of the challenge and the opportunity – investing in our buildings could sustain, in London alone 41,000 jobs per year, with an estimated 210,000 homes to be retrofitted each year between now and 2030.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "Our homes are the greatest contributor to London's greenhouse gas emissions, and the economic impacts of the pandemic and rising energy prices are likely to plunge even more Londoners into fuel poverty.

"That's why I'm pleased to bring together business leaders and local government to discuss the importance of insulating homes and buildings which can both tackle the climate emergency and cost-of-living crisis.

"Businesses must act now to meet this standard and act on them as soon as possible, and work with us to accelerate decarbonisation of London's commercial buildings. To help, I'm expanding my Business Climate

Challenge to support more businesses on the pathway to net zero.”

Since 2020, the Mayor’s building improvement programmes have helped secure funds totalling more than £221 million from government schemes supporting improvements to homes and public buildings.

But public sector funding alone will not support the size and scale of improvements needed. The Mayor is finding new ways to mobilise private sector investment. Earlier this month he committed an initial £90 million in ‘Green Bonds’ which will help unlock over £500 million to finance such low-carbon projects. In his manifesto the Mayor also committed to develop a Financing Facility for London, taking advantage of London’s expertise in finance to develop new approaches that will secure significant funds from the private sector.

In November he committed another £30 million to the Mayor’s Energy Efficiency Fund which will help unlock up to £150 million more in project funding.

Nevertheless, a huge acceleration in the pace of change is required to meet the 2030 ambition. Significant scaling up in the numbers of buildings being retrofitted and at a faster speed; a massive shift to clean heat technologies in our homes and businesses.

Cllr Georgia Gould, Chair of London Councils, said: “London’s buildings are the biggest contributor to carbon emissions in the capital, and without significant upgrading of London’s homes and business premises we will fail to meet one of the defining challenges of our time.

“The push for greener and more energy efficient buildings is set to bring immense benefits to Londoners. This is a vital opportunity to drive a green economic recovery, tackle fuel poverty, and cut carbon emissions.

“Boroughs are committed to working with our partners across the capital on this important agenda, which is integral to London’s ambition to become a net zero city. It also requires sufficient financial support from the government.

“If we get this right, we’ll address the climate emergency, while also reducing energy bills, helping low-income Londoners through the cost-of-living crisis, and instigating an economic recovery and thousands of jobs based on green industries.”

Geeta Nanda OBE, G15 Chair and Chief Executive of MTVH, said: “Housing has a critical role to play in supporting the country to achieve net-zero by 2030, and we know there is a long way to go. Housing associations will play a vital role in this journey by retrofitting at scale and communicating with our residents about the benefits of doing so. I’m pleased that the G15 are working with the Mayor and London Councils on this important summit. G15 members are already starting works on retrofitting their homes in partnership with local authorities through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This will improve the energy efficiency of thousands of homes, reduce residents’ energy bills in the long term and create green jobs. Housing associations are also looking at other aspects of our activity to green our operations through sustainable investment bonds, installing electric charging points near our residents homes, and electrifying our fleets of vehicles.”

Principal at Bloomberg Associates, Adam Freed, said: “Mayor Khan’s leadership and recently announced net zero target are critical to not only address the climate crisis, but to unlock the tremendous

opportunities that investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other climate solutions bring to businesses and residents. We're thrilled to support the expansion of the Mayor's Business Climate Challenge, which is a concrete example of how government and the private sector can work together to support local businesses and accelerate climate action."

Judith Everett, Chair, CBI London Council & Executive Director, Purpose, Sustainability and Stakeholder, The Crown Estate said: "London's business community must play a central role helping the capital reduce its carbon emissions.

The CBI is delighted to be playing its role in supporting the Mayor of London and London Councils in the delivery of this London Greener and Warmer Buildings Summit. Tackling climate change through decarbonisation is a key pillar of the CBI's Seize the Moment agenda – and we remain committed to supporting London, and the country as whole, in the race to net-zero.

Recognising the importance and benefits of retrofit to the capital, we support the call to action for London's businesses to decarbonise their existing buildings. The CBI looks forward to continuing to work alongside the Mayor and London Councils to ensure sufficient support is provide to make this a reality."