

## Newsletter November/December 2017

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### 1. Bonn climate talks - unions zone in on Just Transition

Trade unions from across the globe headed for the international climate change talks in Bonn (November 6-17th) with a single purpose: to hold governments to their word that the Paris Agreement endorsed by the UN in December 2015 would '*Take into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities.*'

[http://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/convention/application/pdf/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf)

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) showcased many of its delegates' imaginative and successful campaigns on Just Transition – see our special briefing, below. Such progress will reinforce demands for a union voice and decent work in the UN's new rulebook for the Paris Agreement. With the GJA joining the ITUC delegation, we're pleased, too, that the organisation is developing a new environmental reps' training programme in 2018.

But relatively few UK unions made it to Bonn, just Unite, Unison and PCS. So we hope this Newsletter will convey the seriousness of the ITUC's intent to get the principle of a Just Transition established in national plans to implement the Paris Agreement. Two good starting points could be the government's 'industrial strategy' and (as we report here) the Mayor of London's Environmental Plan for the capital.



## 2. Bonn: ITUC opens 2008 strategic review

Opening a *strategic review of TUC priorities for 2018* at the UN climate talks in Bonn on Saturday 11 November, ITUC leader Anabella Rosemberg told over 150 union delegates:

'Our work this year and next is to help fill the gaps left by the Paris Agreement. There are huge gaps and inconsistencies in what governments are offering to do. What's needed is a standard approach for all so no-one can pull the wool over our eyes. Transparency, with trade unions and other stakeholders having the right to participate in national low carbon plans.'

The GJA took part in both the ITUC debates and a one-day workshop led by Trade Unions For Energy Democracy (TUED), where we gave an account of the GJA's environmental training programme and online resources.



Delegates from more than 40 nations learned of union-negotiated just transition agreements (Canada), a new Just Transition Commission (Scotland), national climate change training and green workplaces (Zimbabwe, Norway), new campaigns on energy democracy (UK, Argentina) and much more - see section 8 below.

Judging from delegates' contributions in Bonn, in the coming year unions will want the ITUC to prioritise:

- Getting decent work and just transition standards accepted in the UN's new rulebook for the Paris Agreement.
- Promote environmental education for trade unionists.
- Continue to organise in the new industries of the future.
- Address the growing union interest in energy democracy as a counter to 'liberalised' energy markets. In countries like the UK and Argentina, or the EU's 'Internal market for Energy', competitive or privatised energy markets are failing to deliver affordable, secure, carbon-free energy.

## 3. Bonn: Unions demand say in UN rulebook

Unions are demanding a say in a new rulebook that the UN is drafting to make sure governments play fair with their commitments to cut carbon gas emissions. UK unions have a golden opportunity to lobby the UK government to comply with the ITUC's demands.

At present, government commitments are a horrible mixed bag – with a fudge of different start dates, measurements, scope of industries and sectors covered, attitude towards consulting with their unions, businesses and communities. This official Guidance aims to standardise the way governments define their pledges to meet the UN's goals.

An ITUC Special Briefing [www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/brieffornegotiators.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/brieffornegotiators.pdf) calls on governments to incorporate Just Transition commitments into the so-called Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs): '*In this way governments could explain how they have assessed the employment impacts of their decisions, and most important, the measures they will take to support workers. (Some governments, such as South Africa, have already incorporated this in their first NDC.)*'

## 4. London's Environment Strategy - we say talk to unions!

The Greater London Authority consultation on Environment strategy ended in November. The 400 page document was not short of ambition in wanting to make London 'the greenest city in the world'.

While we applaud high ambition the question is whether the policies and proposals match up. Our view is that they don't, despite the many positive things contained in the draft strategy. For one thing the role of national government is crucial in delivering changes at the scale that are needed. The government shows no signs of providing the strategic direction needed to support the plans of metropolitan mayors.

Despite this there are still many things that can be done at a regional level and the current proposals fall short. Our biggest concern is the failure to adequately explore the impact of employers and the workplace. We recognise that this is one of a number of strategies that will make up the London Plan. However, in order to avoid the trap of compartmentalising each one it is crucial that the cross- over links are made loud and clear.

For example, we have long argued that the transition to a low carbon economy could generate hundreds of thousands of new jobs in London. Also, that these new jobs will require new skills. It means any new environment strategy must clearly align with an industrial and education strategy that prioritises these things. This in turn necessitates an engagement with employers and the workforce that challenges the 'business as usual' approach.

The Mayor's current strategy fails to do this. That is why we want to follow up our submission with calls for a 2018 dialogue which brings together the deputy mayors for environment, business, education and skills to ensure an integrated approach to the low carbon transition envisaged in the strategy. This sounds like an obvious development but the reality is that local and national governments have completely failed to do this in the past. It's a mistake the current government continues to make and one that the GLA can't afford to repeat.

You can read our [summary submission here](#). Metropolitan Mayors across the UK will be carrying out similar consultations which the GJA will be monitoring. We encourage our readers to get in touch with ideas for responses that we will report on in 2018.

## 5. Tackling air pollution - book your training place

Trades unions are increasingly getting behind the campaign for clean air inside and outside the workplace. Most recent developments are:

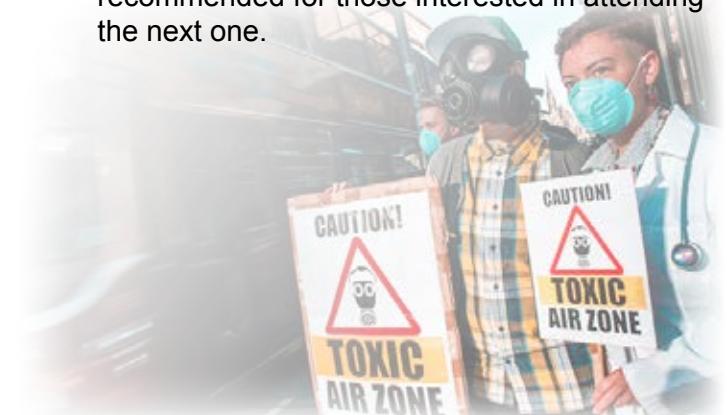
- **The National Education Union (NEU)** has produced guidance jointly with the British Lung Foundation warning staff and students about the dangers of air pollution. Kevin Courtney, Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union, said: "Air pollution is a growing area of concern for members of the National Education Union. Schools cannot solve this problem alone but we are delighted to publish guidance which will help schools take practical steps to protect children." <https://neu.org.uk/latest/national-education-union-and-british-lung-foundation-launch-air-pollution-health-advice>

**Communication Workers Union (CWU):** a national meeting of Area Safety Reps took place in Coventry in November. The GJA did a presentation on Climate Change and Air Quality. The implications for Royal Mail staff of the Corporate Social Responsibility policy were discussed. Issues such as the electrification of vehicles and driverless technology were used to explore the link between employment and the environment. Opportunities for monitoring air quality inside and outside the workplace were also explored. Thanks to Dave Joyce, the CWU Head of Health, Safety and the Environment for setting up the meeting.

- **Trade union training courses** – The series of regional events continues with a new course in Yorkshire and Humberside agreed, details to follow.

Currently, the 'Air pollution – A Trade Union issue' programme includes:

- NW Region on [Friday 1 December 2017](#) in Manchester NE Region on [Friday 26 January 2018 in Leeds](#)
- The Manchester course is full with 35 participants so early registration is recommended for those interested in attending the next one.



## 6. University League Table - Transparency and social justice

Congratulations to our alliance partners, People & Planet, on researching and publishing the latest University League table. This annual report has been instrumental in highlighting issues of social justice and the environment in the Higher Education sector. The table reflects the scores assessed against 13 criteria. One of these is staff and student engagement. Universities can score points if they can show trade union representation on the ‘membership of sustainability committees’.

<https://peopleandplanet.org/university-league>

Holding universities to account has never been more important. Bath University is listed at 61 in the P&P League Table. It's been in the news recently over the level of remuneration for the Vice Chancellor – annual salary £468,000. Unions called for radical reform of how the university was governed and greater involvement for staff and students in key decisions. Dr Michael Carley, president of Bath UCU, said: “For too long the governing body has failed to hold senior managers to account, and ignored warnings from staff and students that this would cause lasting reputational damage. Corporate greed and ineptitude are now overshadowing our high-quality teaching and research”

Compare this with the treatment of outsourced workers in universities and elsewhere. The Independent Workers of Great Britain has launched a landmark case against the University of London. It argues that denying the workers the right to collectively bargain with their “de facto employer” is a breach of article 11 of the European convention on human rights, to join a trade union and have it protect their interests.

The outcome was not known at the time of going to press but the struggle to address the obscene differentials between Vice Chancellors and other staff continues.

## 7. Divestment and Local Authorities - latest

New data has revealed that councils in the UK are investing more than £16 billion in the fossil fuel industry – the companies responsible for the climate crisis. The 350.org ‘*Fuelling the Fire*’ tool allows you to find out exactly how much your council is investing. Unions can use this to research actions that implement the 2017 TUC Congress motion that called for action to investigate the long-term risks for pension funds investing in fossil fuels, promote divestment, and alternative reinvestment in the sustainable economy.’

<https://gofossilfree.org/uk/fuellingthefire/>

Trades union will also find the guidance issued by Friends of the Earth useful when drawing up campaign plans. The briefing covers five issues which come up in discussions around local authority divestment:

1. The ethical arguments for divestment
2. The financial reasons for divestment
3. The practicalities – who is divesting?
4. The practicalities – what can local authorities invest in instead?
5. How to respond to authorities who want to “engage” with fossil fuel companies instead of divesting

[https://cdn.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/local%20authority%20pension%20activist%20briefing%20NOV%202017%20FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://cdn.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/local%20authority%20pension%20activist%20briefing%20NOV%202017%20FINAL_0.pdf)



## 8. BONN: UNIONS ACTING ON A JUST TRANSITION - GJA SPECIAL REPORT

These are some of the excellent reports from trade unions globally at workshops organised by the ITUC in Bonn (November 6-17th 2017):

- Naome Chakanya said that the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) has developed a national climate policy in discussion with government <https://www.ituc-csi.org/Zimbabwe-SDGs-CSO-VNRs-follow-up>. The ZCTU sits on the government's steering committee on climate change mitigation. This work is supported by the union's Climate change and green jobs manual, used for an extensive training-the-trainers programme. The trainers then go out in the field to help develop greenworkplace projects.
- The Canada Labour Congress launched Green Jobs for a Fair Future <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ILebqXhAlk> at its 2016 Congress, giving the union an overwhelming mandate to fight for a just transition. The CLC set up a Climate Change Task Force 'to carry the initiatives forward until 2020, with extensive lobbying for policy changes at the federal government level. Proposals include expansion of Renewable energy, Transportation and Transit infrastructure, and labour market policies to promote a Just Transition for workers and communities who are affected by the shift from oil and gas to clean energy.'

The campaign was supported by Adapting Canadian Workplaces <http://warming.apps01.yorku.ca/projects/work-in-a-warming-world/> and many other organisations.

- Gil McGowan (Alberta Federation of Labour) said the state government has now announced just transition measures in its plan for taking coal out of the energy system by 2030, 'paving the way for Canada's federal government to do the same at national level.' Political bargaining involving the coal power and mining unions includes a deal on a coal transition plan [http://www.afl.org/alberta\\_s\\_coal\\_transition\\_plan\\_a\\_step\\_in\\_right\\_direction\\_for\\_coal\\_workers](http://www.afl.org/alberta_s_coal_transition_plan_a_step_in_right_direction_for_coal_workers) that provides for:
  1. Income support for displaced workers (half of previous earnings, but 75% for coal workers).
  2. Retraining and transferable education vouchers.
  3. Relocation allowances for workers in isolated coal plant.
  4. Land reclamation on abandoned mines.
  5. Funds for affected communities.

McGowan argued, Unions and their members have to be involved. If not, those left out will turn against the plans and build hostile alliances. You engage everyone from the beginning and you get a better result. Build your policy around those most concerned.'

- Hauwa Mustapha Umar (Nigeria Labour Congress) said oil workers were facing the same uncertain future as coal miners in Poland. 'So we must form a strategy to engage in the process of industrial change and a just transition. People are scared of losing what they have for what they are not sure of. The journey for different people means we don't all move at the same pace.'
- Mariano Sanz (Comisiones Obreras: CC-OO) said Spain's government had stymied action on the environment council, but unions were working on a new assessment of the latest impacts of climate change in Spain, supported by a panel of experts.
- Simona Fabiani (CGIL) said that there was a lack of social dialogue on just transition in Italy, with no national decarbonisation plan that unions were involved in. So unions were creating a platform on sustainable development <http://www.cgil.it/futuro-del-lavoro-nella-green-economy/> by building alliances with social movements, with actions focused on health, water and air quality issues. In the green plan, Simona Fabiani of the CGIL's Environment and Territory Department, says that 'economic recovery can only go through work. 'We firmly believe that the future is in the hands of renewable energies, knowledge, research and personal services. These employment sectors may have immense developments.'
- Anne-Beth Skrede (LO Norway) reported that her federation is launching Working lives Climate Week in January 2018, with activities aimed in every workplace <http://www.arbeidslivetsklima.no/>
- Sabrina Haboba (CGT Argentina) <http://www.cgtrainternacional.com.ar/> said her organisation is working on an energy democracy strategy, dissecting who owns energy in the country and developing joint campaigns with NGOs on mining, dam construction and plans for new nuclear plant.

- Jenny Patient (Unite) reported on the Low Carbon Yorkshire campaign led by a task group set up by the regional TUC. Yorkshire emits the highest amount of CO2 of any UK region from its power stations, steelworks, chemical and cement and other industries, employing a total of around 28,00 skilled workers. The campaign is bringing together unions, employers, academics, local enterprise agencies and environmental groups around demands for investment in new industrial processes, low carbon technologies and training schemes for the power and heavy industry sectors.

**The ITUC organised a joint workshop on Just Transition in Bonn with Friends of the Earth International. Key contributions:**

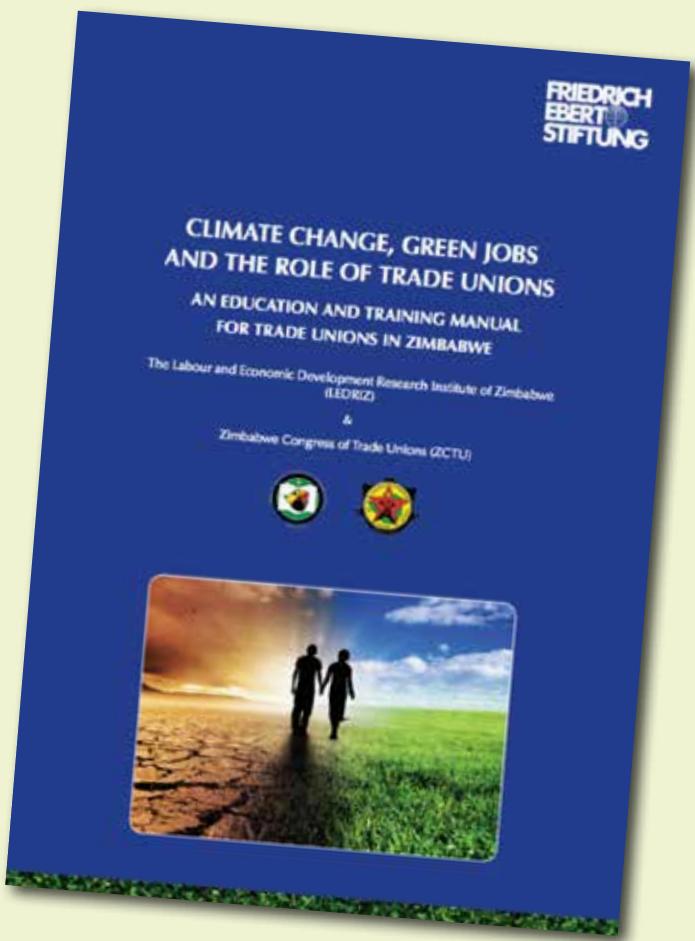
- Mary Church (FoE Scotland) reported that the Scottish Government has agreed to establish the UK's first Just Transition Commission, following a joint campaign with trade unions and the Scottish TUC. Mary said that the commission will 'advise Ministers on adjusting to a more resource-efficient and sustainable economic model in a fair way which will help to tackle inequality and poverty, and promote a fair and inclusive jobs market.' <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/09/8468/8> What's needed now is a climate action plan covering jobs, training and investment that the commission can oversee and develop, she said.
- Lance McCullum (Australian Council of Trade unions) said that community campaign in South Australia led to government agreeing to build new solar thermal plant and battery stores that will provide some 1,500 jobs – a Just Transition success. This is the story of a community faced with the huge impact of the abrupt closure of two coal fired power stations. Of power station workers and their union taking their plan for jobs and solar thermal power to state and federal government, and to global energy giants in France and the United States, demanding a just transition for the people of Port Augusta, demanding a zero carbon future for people everywhere goo.gl/tCTXV5

The ITUC has created a Just Transition Centre <https://www.ituc-csi.org/just-transition-centre> to bring together best practice, and invites unions to submit reports of their work.:

### Zimbabwe unions green reps manual

#### Key aims of Zimbabwe unions' handbook:

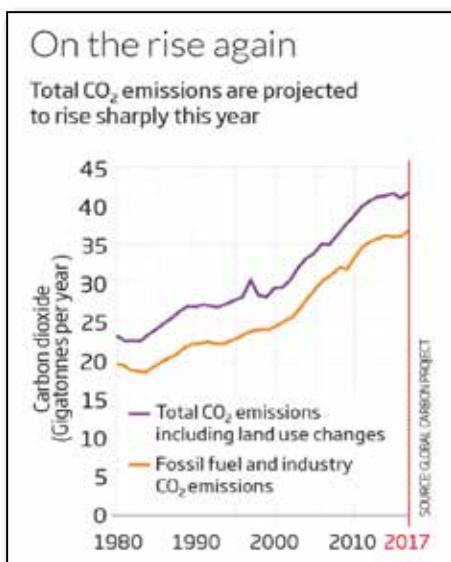
1. Build the capacity of trade unions and workers regarding climate change and how it affects the economy and the world of work.
2. Create awareness and raise consciousness on climate change, its effects, challenges, opportunities and the role of trade unions can play in its mitigation.
3. Impart knowledge and skills by training workers on climate change, effects, and the related challenges and opportunities for trade unions.
4. Promote trade union- and worker-activism and collective action around climate change in order to promote decent work.
5. Advocate for pro-worker climate policies and strategies in Zimbabwe.
6. Give an overview on international structures and the UNFCCC process.



## 7. UN's Fiji President demands climate action now



In the two years since the 2015 Paris Agreement to arrest global overheating, the planet has been beset by unprecedented floods in India, wildfires in California and Portugal, and hurricanes in Dominica.



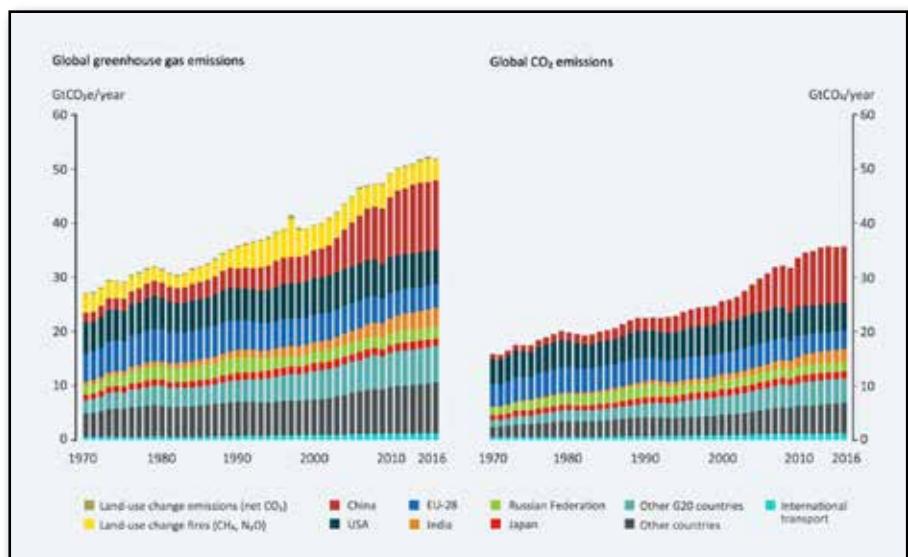
Global emissions look like they are climbing again <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2152929-bad-news-carbon-emissions-have-suddenly-started-rising-again/> after four years of flat-lining. Current climate pledges would still result in well over 3C of warming by 2100.

The Paris plan set 2020 as the start date for governments to act on their 'pledges' to cut carbon gas emissions. But in Bonn, the President of Fiji, who chairs this year's UN conference, upset the apple cart by demanding in the face of such devastation that governments step up their actions now. The new stock take exercise will take place in 2018, supported by the publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) promised special report [https://www.ipcc.ch/news\\_and\\_events/MA112017\\_LAM2\\_SR15.shtml](https://www.ipcc.ch/news_and_events/MA112017_LAM2_SR15.shtml) on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and what governments will need to do to avoid dangerous climate breakdown.

The UN's environment agency (UNEP) says, 'The gap between the reductions needed and the national pledges made in Paris is alarmingly high.' Global emission continue to rise alarmingly.

The UK is underperforming. 'Without significant new policy interventions, the UK will achieve at most half of the reductions needed between now and 2030, according to the 2016 progress report from the Committee on Climate Change (CCC).' <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016-CCC-Progress-Report-Executive-Summary.pdf>

<https://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-frontlines-briefing-climate-19266>



SOURCE: UNEP 2017

# Hazards c a m p a i g n



## Air pollution – A Trade Union issue

Friday, December 1st, 2017 from 1.00pm – 4.00pm

Air pollution in the UK is a public health emergency. Over 40,000 people die each year from causes linked to the air that they breathe – more than obesity and alcohol combined.

Workers are exposed to and create pollution to fulfil contractual obligations to employers. It is an occupational health issue that employers take little responsibility for.

Attending this course will help you to:

- Examine why air pollution is both a workplace issue and a public health one
- Find out about air pollution busting Citizen Science techniques
- Create action plans to deal with workplace exposures
- Create action plans to meaningfully engage in air pollution with local councils
- Share experience, knowledge and ideas

Lunch provided

UNISON Regional Office,  
Arena Point 1,  
Hunts Bank,  
Manchester M3 1UN

Registration is required.  
Please confirm your attendance by email to:  
[janet@gmhazards.org.uk](mailto:janet@gmhazards.org.uk)

For further information please contact Janet Newsham on Tel 0161 6367558



## Air pollution – A Trade Union issue

Friday, January 26th, 2018 from 1.00pm – 4.00pm

Air pollution in the UK is a public health emergency. Over 40,000 people die each year from causes linked to the air that they breathe – more than obesity and alcohol combined.

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- Create action plans to meaningfully engage in air pollution with local councils
- Share experience, knowledge and ideas

Lunch provided

PCS Offices,  
3rd Floor  
Town Centre House,  
Merrion Centre  
Leeds LS2 8LY

Registration is required.  
Please confirm your attendance by email to:  
[janet@gmhazards.org.uk](mailto:janet@gmhazards.org.uk)

For further information please contact Janet Newsham on Tel 0161 6367558





## GLA Environment Strategy – Summary of GJA recommendations

The Greener Jobs Alliance has sent in a detailed response to the London Mayor's Draft Environment Strategy. Below is a summary of the main recommendations we have made as part of the consultation process. The strategy is wide ranging and contains 11 important environmental factors spread across 400 pages.

The GJA has decided to prioritise those elements which are closely aligned with its objectives even though we would support greater ambition in other areas that are likely to be addressed by organisations that we work closely with.

These recommendations are also supported by the Battersea and Wandsworth TUC and Furzedown Low Carbon Zone. If you wish to see our full submission it can be accessed on the GJA web site.

1. Insert a reference to a 'Just Transition' in the strategy and make a commitment to engage with the workforce and their recognised trades unions on implementation. What happens inside workplaces is as important as outside factors for achieving the strategy objective.
2. Insert a section into each relevant chapter that sets out the obligations of employers and how they can contribute to GLA targets and objectives.
3. Identify the opportunities for much closer working between the Mayor's teams. For example, the Environment, Skills and Business teams need a co-ordinated plan to show how job creation and skills can be enhanced through the strategy objectives.
4. Adopt a clearer commitment to public control of energy based on renewable energy and accountability
5. Shorter term milestones are needed and mapped across to each policy and set of proposals. These KPIs should then be subject to annual review where appropriate. Without this there is a risk that the policies will just become a set of good intentions.
6. Insert a Chapter on Education for Sustainable Development. Provide resources and guidance to organisations who can mainstream the policies contained in the strategy into the curriculum. Include programmes that also support workplace and community based training in line with Article 12 of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.
7. The air quality strategy needs a much clearer focus on the role of employers and businesses. Their responsibilities should be more commensurate with their role in generating pollution.
8. The air pollution audits being funded for 50 London schools should be extended to other public sector locations used by vulnerable groups.
9. The strategy should include proposals for a voluntary code for large businesses that shows how they will map their carbon emissions to the Mayor's proposed carbon budgets.
10. The proposed Ultra Low Emission Zone is not ambitious enough. Having the boundary as the North and South Circulars will fail to deal with pollution hot spots outside this new zone. A larger zone that more accurately reflects air pollution standards is required.