TEC-LEDNet joint statement

London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) and the London Environment Directors' Network (LEDNet) comprise London's local government environment leaders. We met together on Thursday 21st February to discuss how we could work together to identify and address our pressing concerns around air quality and resources and waste management. This statement sets out the ambition and commitments that were developed at that meeting.

Introduction

We have a vision for London as a global sustainability leader, where clean air and flourishing green infrastructure supports the health and wellbeing of its residents. We believe that tackling environmental degradation can support our efforts to improve the lives of our most vulnerable residents.

In advance of our meeting, we identified three shared priorities around air quality, and three around waste and resources, namely: increasing walking, cycling and use of public transport; reducing private car use; creating low emission neighbourhoods; minimising waste; maximising recycling; and increasing cleanliness and reducing fly-tipping.

At our meeting, we agreed that London faces a number of significant challenges to deliver on these shared priorities, and our overall vision. For example, we need to encourage Londoners to adopt behaviours that reduce air pollution from transport and remove unnecessary waste, by fostering positive, new social norms. We recognise, however, that this is a long-term goal, and therefore we will also seek to use regulatory and enforcement powers that can support these aims.

We commit to bringing our political leadership and professional expertise to achieving this, working across the boroughs and together with the GLA, TfL and other partners in London.

Resources and waste

We recognise challenges at every point in the resources and waste system (see Appendix 1). Above all, we need to reorientate our work on waste and recycling towards considering waste as a resource, looking at resources issues in the round and building the circular economy. The cross-cutting solutions that we will pursue are as follows:

1. We will support people to change their behaviour by making the right thing the easiest thing to do. We will:
   a. Engage communities at the local level and help them understand our waste and resources system and their role within in;
   b. Focus on behaviour change amongst young people and highly mobile groups across London; and
   c. Use the most effective messaging for different audiences, supported by a consistent overarching narrative.

2. We will address the ways in which the type of home one lives in makes it harder for residents to do the right thing. We will:

a. Ensure that our own planning policies and decisions deliver the smart waste infrastructure inside and outside homes that our residents require; and
   b. Ensure that landlords understand their responsibilities in relation to waste and recycling, and that they play an active role in supporting their tenants in this regard, including through landlord licencing schemes.

3. We will advocate for national policy and legislation that supports us to deliver smart, cost-effective waste reduction, recycling and disposal services that are nested within a wider circular economy approach. We will call on government to:
   a. Identify and address the root causes of excessive resource use, including by designing it out of products and processes at the earliest point;
   b. Commit to an approach to resources and waste infrastructure that incorporates circular economy and behaviour-led approaches; and
   c. Introduce Extended Producer Responsibility schemes that enact the polluter pays principle, support circular economy thinking, embed more efficient product design and ensure that sufficient funding comes to councils to support their role in the system.

4. We will support one another to learn by taking a unified approach to data analysis and insights. We will:
   a. Call for metrics that reflect the waste hierarchy, increasing our focus on reducing our consumption of resources;
   b. Share and analyse data to create insights, including behavioural insights, which are built back into our services and programmes; and
   c. Support entrepreneurs to develop technological solutions that meet local government needs as evidenced by our data and insights.

Air quality

Our discussion focused on transportation as the key driver of air pollution in London. We recognised the context for transport is that London's population continues to grow, and that technological development is a major factor in changing the way in which residents and businesses use transport.

For example, whilst public transport use and walking and cycling (sustainable transport) broadly continue to rise, so has the use of ride-sharing; and whilst shared rides can reduce single-occupancy trips and car ownership, it can also draw trips away from sustainable transport. At the same time, the nature of cars and other private and commercial vehicles is also changing, as they increasingly become electric or gas powered, creating a need for associated new infrastructure. And as we increasingly shop online, the increase in commercial delivery vehicles is significantly contributing to congestion and pollution. We need to understand, adapt to and help shape these changes to our transport system.

We also recognised the challenge of the disparate governance of London's transport infrastructure, which is split mainly between boroughs and TfL. Amongst other things, this means that boroughs have no control over red routes, which are some of the most polluting roads in the city.

We identified a series of additional cross-cutting challenges affecting the priorities we set out around air quality, which are captured at Appendix 2.

The cross-cutting solutions that we will pursue are as follows:

1. We will create and drive a shared narrative that reframes sustainable travel as a desirable choice, making links to health and wellbeing benefits, including clean air. We will use messaging that reaches hearts and minds (including locally-specific messages), use behavioural insights, and communicate internally, externally and in a coordinated fashion working with TfL. Encouraging Londoners to make a positive shift in transport choices will drive political leadership, further resources for sustainable transport and reduce car use, creating a virtuous circle.

2. We will advocate for effective regulation at national and local level that disincentivises use of private vehicles and polluting vehicles. This includes road user charging in London and schemes to support the uptake of low and ultra low emission private and commercial vehicles. We will continue to develop the use of existing powers, for example emission-based parking charges, that support these aims, and we will clearly justify these policies to residents.

3. We will work to understand and adapt our infrastructure to support sustainable travel and clean vehicles, by expanding and joining up cycle and walking routes, increasing delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and creating low emission neighbourhoods that demonstrate a holistic, place-based approach to reducing pollution, enhancing environmental quality and residents' wellbeing.

Thursday 21st February
Lambeth Town Hall

Appendix 1: challenges to sustainable transport
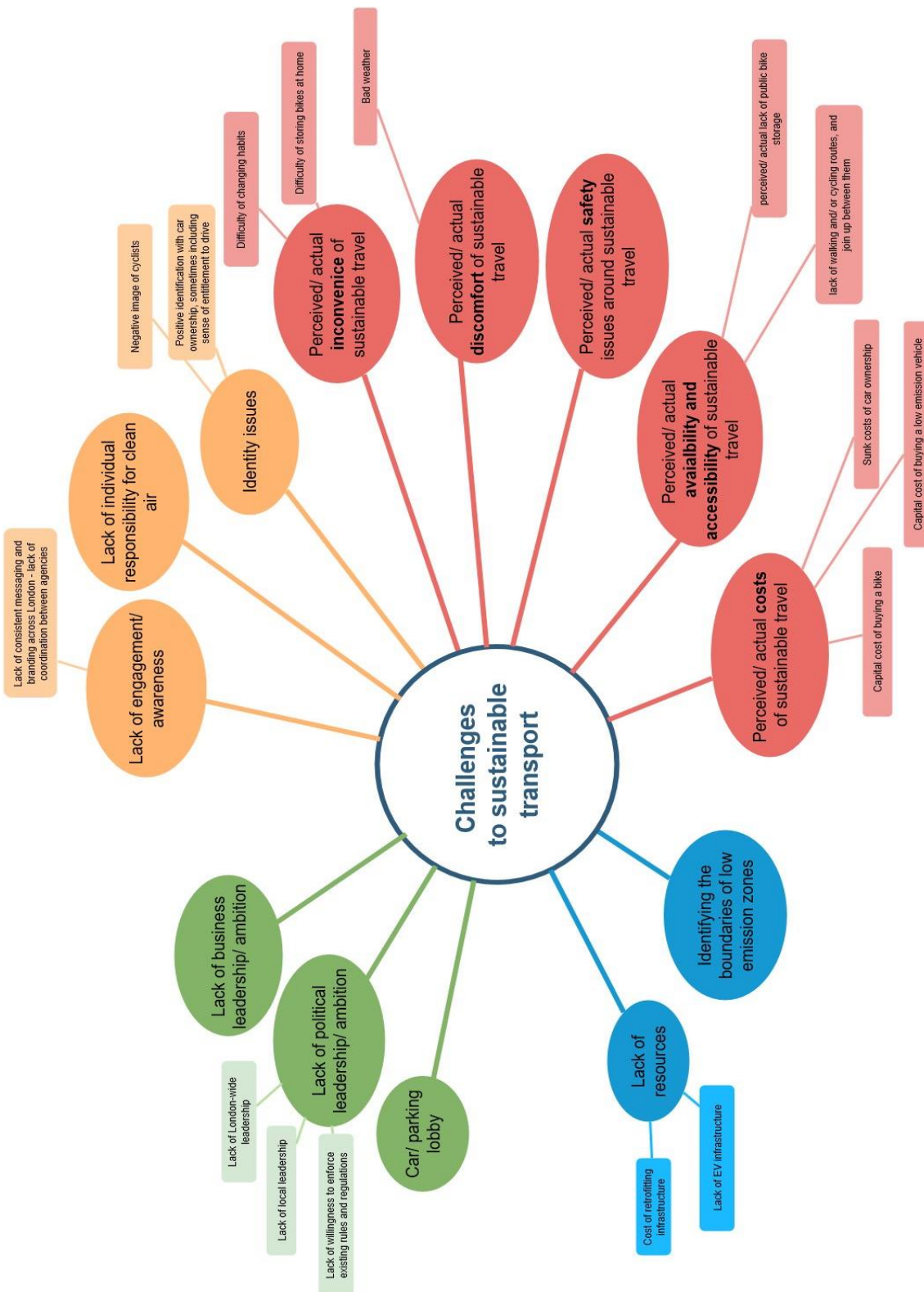
Appendix 2: challenges in resources and waste