# Sadiq Khan’s Green Belt plans risk turning London into an urban oven



Mayor Sadiq Khan’s recent suggestion that parts of London’s Green Belt could be sacrificed to address the city’s housing crisis has once again laid bare his government’s reckless disregard for our environment and public safety. While he has yet to specify what areas or how many homes might be built, his office’s hints about future plans reveal an obsession with quick fixes rather than responsible planning. This approach—notably lacking in any real concern for the long-term health of London—betrays a misguided prioritisation that will harm our city rather than help it.

Environmental experts and opposition voices have rightly condemned these proposals. The Grantham Research Institute warns that building on the Green Belt would exacerbate the urban heat island effect, making London even more vulnerable to deadly heatwaves and wildfires. Given the city’s already increasing temperatures—Khan himself has warned of days reaching 45°C—the last thing London needs is yet more urban expansion that makes these dangers worse. Yet instead of confronting the climate crisis head-on, Khan’s government continues to gamble with London’s safety and its remaining green spaces.

This dangerous gamble comes despite mounting evidence that London is becoming an oven. The city’s increasing heatwaves, including the record-breaking 2022 event, demonstrate how ill-prepared the capital is for the worsening climate crisis. Overcrowded and poorly equipped housing stock only compounds the problem—making overheating and health risks more severe. While grandiose plans for green initiatives are being painted as solutions, the reality is that pushing development into protected areas would undermine efforts to build resilient, sustainable communities.

Amidst this chaos, the government has pledged a mere £4 million to try and bolster London’s climate resilience—an insult when compared to the scale of the threat. These measures, focused on expanding green spaces, barely scratch the surface of what is needed. Real leadership would involve protecting existing green spaces, not destroying them in a misguided rush to meet unrealistic housing targets. Instead, Khan’s government appears more interested in short-term political wins than safeguarding London’s future.

Anti-growth advocates and environmental defenders are right to oppose such reckless development. They see through the empty promises of “growth” that will only serve to jeopardise London’s ecological balance and public safety. The push to develop on Green Belt land is nothing short of a betrayal of Londoners’ interests—yet another sign of a government more concerned with political expediency than with responsible, sustainable planning.

As London's future hangs in the balance, the real question remains: will the city’s leaders prioritize the preservation of our green spaces and safety, or continue to gamble with the city’s environmental and social fabric? The choice is clear—London cannot afford to sacrifice its natural heritage on the altar of short-term housing schemes proposed by a government eager to ignore the climate emergency. It’s time for a new approach—one that protects, preserves, and prepares London for the challenges ahead.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/building-homes-london-green-belt-heatwaves-wildfires-sadiq-khan-grantham-institute-b1238560.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/building-homes-london-green-belt-heatwaves-wildfires-sadiq-khan-grantham-institute-b1238560.html> - Experts have criticised Sadiq Khan's plan to build homes on London's Green Belt, warning it could increase the risk of heatwaves and wildfires. The Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics highlighted that such development may intensify the urban heat island effect, leading to higher temperatures and greater wildfire risks. The report also noted that without adaptation measures, London could become a riskier place to live and work, potentially losing its competitive edge. The mayor's office has yet to specify the number and locations of proposed homes on the Green Belt.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/18/london-facing-45c-days-in-foreseeable-future-mayor-sadiq-khan-warns> - Mayor Sadiq Khan has warned that London could experience multiple 45°C days in the foreseeable future, potentially disrupting essential city functions. He emphasised the need for immediate adaptation measures, criticising the UK government for not providing sufficient support to help cities address the climate crisis. The warning follows a record-breaking heatwave in July 2022, which saw temperatures exceed 40°C for the first time in the UK, leading to school closures and increased wildfire incidents.
4. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/news/policymakers-must-be-much-better-prepared-for-heatwaves-in-london/> - The Grantham Research Institute has called for improved preparedness for heatwaves in London, highlighting that rising temperatures are already causing health and economic impacts. The commentary criticises the government's focus on responding to heat-related health consequences rather than prevention, urging for a more integrated approach to mitigate risks. It also points out that many UK homes are at risk of overheating, with London being particularly vulnerable due to the urban heat island effect.
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy73n9kxyjo> - Mayor Sadiq Khan has announced plans to 'actively explore' building on parts of London's Green Belt to address the housing crisis. He described current restrictions on development as 'wrong, out-of-date and simply unsustainable' given the increasing demand for housing. The proposal has been met with criticism from the London Conservatives, who view it as a 'complete betrayal' of the mayor's previous pledges to protect the Green Belt.
6. <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/259833/record-breaking-heat-putting-uk-public-health/> - Research from Imperial College London's Grantham Institute reveals that one in five people in the UK have suffered ill health due to extreme heat in the past five years. The study highlights the escalating public health risks associated with record-breaking temperatures, with 2024 confirmed as the hottest year on record. The findings underscore the need for urgent adaptation measures to protect vulnerable populations from heat-related health issues.
7. <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/4m-fund-to-safeguard-london-from-climate-change> - Mayor Sadiq Khan has announced a £4 million fund to safeguard London from climate change impacts, including heatwaves and flooding. The initiative aims to enhance the city's resilience by investing in green spaces and nature-based projects. The mayor emphasised the disproportionate effects of the climate crisis on areas with high Black, Asian, and minority ethnic populations, highlighting the need for equitable adaptation strategies.