

“THE CHILDREN’S CHARTER”

Compiled by Joelle Taylor

Over a thousand schoolchildren from across the capital have been considering how they would make the world’s greatest city even better if they were “**Mayor for the Day**” as part of the **London Children’s Festival**, in partnership with the [BE OPEN Foundation](#) and, the [Children’s Commissioner for England](#) and delivered by [A New Direction](#).

Focusing on Mayoral priorities such as: ‘*Jobs, Skills and Education*’, ‘*Environment, Health and Food*’, ‘*Crime, Safety and Travel*’ and ‘*Housing, Play and Public Spaces*’, children and young people, aged nine to 14, across eight schools have been looking at how they connect to and interpret these themes and have come up with their own ideas to make the city a better place for all.

On 1 December 2017, 250 pupils convened at City Hall, for the Festival’s culmination event – for a presentation of their thoughts and ideas to representatives of the Mayor’s Office, the Greater London Authority, and the Children’s Commissioner for England.

Spoken-word artist, Joelle Taylor, created this poem which weaves together all the issues and solutions raised by the young people involved.

Following the Festival, the young peoples’ ideas and the poem will feed into the development of a new **London Children’s Charter** by the Mayor’s Fund for London. The London Children’s Charter will help to advocate, influence and prioritise what young Londoners feel passionate about, and inform policy makers about what matters to the next generation.



#MAYORFORTHEDAY

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MAYOR OF LONDON



In London
there are more children
than pigeons
So when a child speaks
the city must listen.

Our voices/ are ballot boxes.

If I was
Mayor for Day
I would

Ban all traffic from the city for one day a week
Have cars prohibited from every other street
Decree parts of our city pedestrianised;
 It would revolutionise
Our approaches to fitness and exercise
If we had a running lane
Or brought the inside outdoors
Set up vast computer parks with interactive grass floors
A virtual work out web
Where the city can get fitter step by step
And treadmills power digital screens
And every child can meet safely to pursue digital dreams
And children from different streets can join together in teams
And the trees are decorated with solar powered lights
And music is activated by touch, connected by satellites
to bus shelters, Tube stations and all communal places
as a basic civil right
(people who play together rarely fight).
We should introduce more humour to rush hour
print jokes on the walls of the Underground
so that every heart flowers,
I would
Reward people with jokes for recycling rubbish
And the names of those who recycle the most should be published
and honoured:
They are the way forward -
 Build something beautiful out of something discarded.

If I was
Mayor for a Day
I would

Invest in healthy eating for our children
We could have role reversal in our kitchens
Provide youth-friendly websites with advice on nutrition
Including kids' recipes, and good foods from around the globe
 Swap the settee for a skipping rope

Make sure every household has a bicycle
An independent healthy means of travel
And a safe lane for children to use on the roads
Free movement throughout all London postcodes
I'd provide every urban conurbation with a vast geophysical
technological garden
Where people can meet and breathe
I'd sow seeds across concrete streets
Grow tomatoes up tower blocks and plant vegetables in thick rows
In the laybys at the sides of pedestrianised roads -
Every borough should have its own farm
So we can learn to live on this planet without causing any more harm
And we work together toward becoming more self sufficient
And connected with the natural environment
I would create more water features, plant more trees
To attract seed scattering birds and pollinating bees
I'd provide
Filters on street corners
So people with asthma
Can begin to breathe better
And find a way of reducing the city's pollution
A meeting of minds, of industry and academic institutions
to create a lasting solution;

If I was
Mayor for a Day
I would

Tackle school yard bullies
I'd give everyone a safe space to speak freely
Have presentations on hate crime in school assemblies;
I would work to build a safer community
Where people aren't scared to be alone in the city
I would try to understand the causes of criminality,
That perhaps gangs are a consequence of a poor economy;
You see
We the children believe
That crime is caused by poverty
And we are wondering how this could be in such a beautiful and shining
city
Populated by the world's wealthy?
We ask that every human has a place to live
That every human has enough to eat
That we don't have to walk to school past people huddled on our
streets;
they once were our neighbours.
As a matter of priority I would return our youth centres
I would provide us with our own means to exploring youth cultures
A recording studio, a rehearsal space, a pool table
So that every child feels able

to grow toward the sun -
I would award self-determination back to the young.
I would try to build safer neighbourhoods
With street parties, street debates, street dinners and fêtes
So everyone feels understood -
London is the home of multiculturalism
So we should draw on our great history of migration
To draw together the city's population:
Provide centres where new arrivals can meet with the city's youth
Refuges and safe spaces, places of welcome where they can be
introduced
and walk into the future as one.
We should all feel free to practise our religions
We could have one centre in every borough for the practice of every
faith
A peaceful meeting ground, a spiritual escape:
A church can be a synagogue
A temple can also be a mosque
If we all shared the same building
If we all worked toward religious freedom
Adults would be more like the city's children.

This our Children's Charter
a 21st century Magna Carta

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this is our Children's

Charter.