

THE JEWISH MANIFESTO FOR LONDON



Preface

The London Jewish Forum (LJF), founded in 2006, is an advocate for the capital's Jewish community, campaigning and influencing change in Parliament, City Hall and the local borough councils; institutions that make decisions affecting the lives of Jewish Londoners every day. Rooted in Jewish values, we work across the community regardless of religious, cultural or political affiliations or beliefs, ensuring that Jewish Londoners have a voice in the great city in which they lead their lives.

Led by its steering group of Jewish leaders from across the community, since its inception the LJF has worked closely with politicians and stakeholders to improve the lives of Jewish communities across London.

Through projects such as Golders Green Together, Chanukah in the Square and events such as 'Think Jewish London' and political hustings, for more than fifteen years the LJF has ensured that Jewish Londoners are represented across the capital and their voices are heard.

The LJF has been joined by the Board of Deputies of British Jews – the democratic and representative body for the UK's Jewish community – and the Jewish Leadership Council – a Jewish charity which brings together the major British Jewish organisations to work for the good of the British Jewish community – in writing this Jewish manifesto for London.

The circumstances during which this manifesto have been written are unprecedented. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on health, life and work in the capital have been profound, not least in terms of the delay of the London Mayoral and London Assembly elections from 2020 to 2021. TfL's deficit, the change of work patterns and the city's environmental responsibilities mean that the next mayoral term is likely to be the most challenging since the role was established. There is a desire to rebuild from the pandemic a stronger, more compassionate city, as reflected in the cross-party Greater London Authority (GLA) recovery missions.

It is therefore critical that the Mayor and GLA work with communities such as the Jewish community in building consensus around these difficult issues. When money is short, the temptation is to cut back on capacity spent on engaging with stakeholders. However, a mayor for all Londoners must see the process of governing the capital as leading a rolling London-wide conversation to ensure we can step forward as one city.

This manifesto is a contribution to that conversation by the Jewish community. Working with the relevant communal agencies, we have identified issues and concerns of Jewish Londoners.

With pressures on housing, community cohesion and the social care sector to name a few, this manifesto seeks to build upon the crucial relationship between decision-makers in London and their Jewish constituents, ensuring our elected officials and public servants are understanding and responsive to those challenges.

Some of these issues and concerns are shared with residents from all backgrounds, so working with communities across the capital, we strive to deliver a safe, cohesive, inclusive and shared city that all Londoners can enjoy.

The issues raised in this manifesto will nevertheless require work in partnership with politicians and community leaders for years to come as we face post-pandemic challenges together, and we hope it serves as a foundation of the work to be done during the election and beyond.

Adrian Cohen – Co-Chair of the London Jewish Forum
Andrew Gilbert – Co-Chair of the London Jewish Forum
Marie van der Zyl – President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews
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THE TEN COMMITMENTS

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WE ASK POLICYMAKERS TO:

1

Work with the Jewish community to combat antisemitism in all its forms, wherever it appears. Promote and implement the full International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism.

2

Work closely with minority communities to oppose all forms of prejudice, hatred and discrimination. Promote social cohesion by supporting interfaith and intercommunal activity.

3

Support the safety and security of the Jewish community by working with the Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police, and communal organisations such as the Community Security Trust (CST).

4

Promote links between London and Israel, for example through trade and cultural missions, and engagement with municipalities of major Israeli cities. Oppose divisive boycotts of Israel and protect Jewish and Israeli cultural events from intimidation.

5

Work with boroughs to increase housing supply in the centres of Jewish life in London, working with Jewish and other housing associations.

6

Consider the equalities impacts of new development and transport schemes on faith communities, engaging in proper consultation prior to implementing them.

7

Promote better support and funding for faith-based and culturally sensitive welfare and social care providers.

8

Support Jewish schools and the Jewish youth sector through better access to GLA networks and resources.

9

Celebrate and protect London's Jewish culture and heritage assets.

10

Support faith-based social action on issues such as homelessness, food poverty, loneliness, asylum and climate change.

INTRODUCTION – JEWISH LIFE IN LONDON IN THE POST-COVID ERA

The defining issue of the next GLA term for Jewish Londoners, as for all Londoners, will be how to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic: socially, economically and spiritually.

The Jewish community is defined by relationships: Members of a synagogue community that come together to celebrate and mourn; volunteers and service users brought together by charities; extended families that gather for Shabbat and festivals.

Despite often inspirational online innovation, there is no doubt that the life of the community has been frayed by Covid-19. With so much of Jewish life based on in-person relationships, it is not known how straightforward it will be to repair the fabric of community after at least 18 months of rupture. Third sector organisations – from synagogues to social care providers to cultural institutions – will have to manage that challenge while facing a Covid-19 and post-Covid-19 economic shock.

Indeed, many of the challenges faced by the city as a whole are faced by the Jewish community in microcosm. For recovery programmes to be successful, they must engage with the city's communities, ensuring policy legitimacy in a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-faith city. The Jewish community is ready to play our part in the conversations between decision-makers and communities so that we can rebuild together.

These challenges come as the capital's 160,000-strong Jewish community continues to evolve. Household size is growing. The boom in Jewish education has been sustained. However, there is a disparity between those areas with significant Jewish infrastructure – synagogues, schools, care homes, shops and cultural facilities – and those with no functioning Jewish buildings. Different parts of the community will have different priorities.

This Jewish Manifesto for London outlines the Jewish community's priorities from security to social action, and from housing to healthcare in the post-Covid-19 era. Many of the challenges are similar to the pre-Covid-19 era, from a housing market that breaks up support networks to a social care crisis that puts our parents and grandparents in a difficult position. However, like many minority groups, the Jewish community faces particular challenges with racism – in the form of antisemitism – and ensuring that policy-makers understand the community's particular needs and concerns.

You will find a summary of this manifesto in the 'Ten Commitments' section. We call on all mayoral and GLA candidates to support them to ensure that London continues to be a city where Jewish families can continue to live, contribute and thrive in the years ahead, whatever challenges we face as a city.

ANTISEMITISM, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND COHESION

Diversity is deeply intertwined within the DNA of London. This pluralistic, vibrant and mixed city champions minorities such as the Jewish community and pushes back against prejudice and hate. Building on that tradition is key to enabling resilient communities in the post-Covid-19 era.

However, in recent years, there has sadly been an increase in recorded incidents of antisemitism and an explosion of anti-Jewish prejudice in political discourse. Regrettably, antisemitic conspiracy theories have emerged concerning the pandemic as well.

The Community Security Trust (CST) recorded 1,668 antisemitic incidents in the UK during 2020. The total reported in 2020, although lower than in 2019 because of the pandemic, sustains a pattern of historically high antisemitic incident figures in recent years, with more than 100 incidents recorded in 11 of the 12 months of 2020. By way of comparison, CST only recorded monthly totals surpassing 100 incidents on six occasions between January 2006 and March 2016. Just over half (54%) of the antisemitic incidents recorded by the CST in 2020 took place in Greater London, with the highest incident figures in boroughs with the largest Jewish populations, such as Barnet (243), Hackney (116) and Camden (91). The British Jewish community has been horrified to see antisemitism become a major national issue, particularly as antisemitic tropes entered the vocabulary of some elected politicians and members of political parties.

This increase in prejudice is acutely felt in London due to the large proportion of Jews and Jewish institutions based in the capital. It is exacerbated by intimidation through extreme anti-Israel activity, such as protesters demonstrating sympathy with antisemitic terrorist organisations like Hizballah and Hamas, and the divisive Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) campaigns. These activities contribute nothing to building peace in the Middle East but frequently negatively impact on Jewish communal life, including in the Kosher sections of supermarkets; on university campuses; and on transport networks. In recent years, City Hall has worked well with Transport for London and local authorities to remove hostile graffiti and posters and that should be continued.

There have been notable incidents of antisemitism directed towards visibly Jewish individuals on public transport in London. We encourage the Mayor to look at what further steps can be taken to support the security of minority groups on public transport, working with the Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police, and community groups such as the CST.

A constant threat to London's Jewish community comes from terrorism. This affects all Londoners, but as was shown in Halle (October 2019), Pittsburgh (October 2018), Copenhagen (February 2015), Paris (January 2015), Brussels (May 2014) and Toulouse (March 2012), there is a specific terrorist threat to Jewish communities.

Elected officials have a responsibility to forcefully reject extremist rhetoric, including the use of antisemitic tropes, and call out those who indulge in such hate speech. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)'s working definition of antisemitism with all its examples, as adopted by the GLA, is the internationally-respected guidance on considering whether rhetoric is antisemitic. It is critical it is implemented in practice, such as through its continued use by the College of Policing as a practical guide to help recognise when antisemitism might be present.

We are delighted that all 32 boroughs have adopted the IHRA definition, and the Mayor should take a lead on encouraging all local authorities to assimilate the definition into their policies and practices.

Opposition to antisemitism should be fully integrated into equalities training for City Hall, Transport for London, Metropolitan Police Service and London Fire Brigade staff, and should be developed in partnership with the relevant Jewish communal organisations, such as the Community Security Trust or the Antisemitism Policy Trust.

Support for the Jewish community in combatting antisemitism has been critical. The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) grant towards the Community Security Trust's work in supporting victims of antisemitic hate crime in London has been an especially important contribution towards the community's wellbeing.

We are also concerned for our fellow faith communities, particularly following the attacks on the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch and churches in Sri Lanka and France. The Jewish community was also shaken by the Finsbury Park Mosque attack in June 2017, an assault on a fellow faith community in our city.

For that reason, CST's SAFE (Security Advise for Everyone) programme, set up to provide security advice to other communities, is incredibly important. We are pleased that SAFE receives support from the MOPAC and works closely with the Countering Violent Extremist team, and we hope this continues.

Meanwhile, the prejudice facing different communities, including Muslim, Black, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) and LGBT+ Londoners, is a scandal against which the Jewish community stands in solidarity. We welcome and are keen to be involved in initiatives to tackle racism where appropriate. This should include looking at policing and policy responses to these issues, as well as supporting education and commemoration of the wrongs of the past and about how to forge a better future.

Interfaith activity and dialogue make a vital contribution to community cohesion and the Mayor of London should support the work of groups such as the Faiths Forum for London, the London Boroughs Faith Network, the Faiths and Beliefs Forum, the Council of Christians and Jews and Mitzvah Day. The GLA has been particularly active in the field of women and interfaith, and this should continue.

POLICY ASK: Oppose antisemitism in all its forms and wherever it is found. Uphold the IHRA definition of antisemitism and seek to implement it in practice. Encourage boroughs to do so likewise.

POLICY ASK: Call out irresponsible language and behaviour in relation to escalations of tension in the Middle East by people in positions of responsibility. Such irresponsible language can often cause distress to London's Jewish community and impact on social cohesion.

POLICY ASK: Antisemitism training should be delivered to all City Hall, Transport for London, Metropolitan Police Service and London Fire Brigade staff.

POLICY ASK: In light of the security threat level to the Jewish community, ensure that combating antisemitism and hate crime in London remains a priority for City Hall. There should be a continued focus on terrorism prevention and community resilience, and MOPAC should continue to support the work of CST in providing services to support victims of antisemitic hate crime. Other organisations working on communal security such as Shomrim should also be engaged.

POLICY ASK: Bear down on the creation of a hostile atmosphere towards Jews, whether on university campuses, through graffiti/posters, or demonstrations that support antisemitic terrorist groups.

POLICY ASK: Support CST's SAFE programme to ensure other communities get the security advice they need.

POLICY ASK: Challenge prejudice against different communities, including Muslim, Black, GRT and LGBT+ communities, incorporating the Jewish community in projects where appropriate.

POLICY ASK: Support and encourage Jewish and multifaith charities engaged in promoting inter-community, interfaith relations and social action within the city.

HOUSING AND PLANNING

At the heart of Jewish life is the idea of community. The ability of Jewish residents to live in close proximity to synagogues, Jewish schools, care homes and kosher shops is paramount to communal life. This is especially true of Orthodox Jews who are Sabbath-observant and who must live within walking distance of their place of worship.

The London planning framework should support the development of infrastructure for faith communities, including places of worship, faith schools and other facilities, whether that be through the construction of new infrastructure or the expansion of existing premises.

Extended families and communities act as support networks helping to build resilience, support mental health, ensure childcare availability and contribute to public safety. When market forces break up these communities through overpriced housing, society loses out. Affordable housing is key to resilient communities.

The Jewish community requires active policy-making in the field of housing that will provide the affordability that ensures such community structures continue to thrive. Jewish communities across the capital are struggling to nurture the next generation of young families, as first-time buyers are priced out of the capital. It is also becoming difficult for those who wish to rent to afford to live in an area with an extensive Jewish infrastructure. In addition, larger Jewish families – more typical of, but not exclusive to, the Strictly Orthodox section of the community – are increasingly struggling to find accommodation.

While the active policy at increasing social and affordable housing in recent years is welcome, it is critical that there is a mixed supply of housing. New housing for London's communities needs to be developed with the needs of those communities in mind, be that in terms of design or tenure. As such, community-focused housing associations, including Jewish community housing associations, like JLiving and the Agudas Israel Housing Association, must continue to be partners in housing policy, as they have the expertise to deliver for their communities.

Furthermore, planning policy in general must support housing supply for larger families, which are not just found in the Jewish community but minority communities throughout the capital.

Development can be controversial with existing residents often concerned by the potential for the loss of green spaces, the overwhelming of infrastructure and services or an increase in traffic. Equally, it may impinge upon existing facilities, and there is particular concern about how development may affect key heritage assets, like the Bevis Marks Synagogue. It is important to secure consensus for changes. For many residents, their faith community plays a larger part in their identity than geographical community, and so representative bodies should be engaged where appropriate to help create that positive conversation.

One positive development for many Orthodox Jews in recent years has been the construction of eruvim (singular: eruv), boundaries that allow the observant to carry within them during the Sabbath, an activity which is usually not allowed. These eruvim are particularly liberating for those with responsibility for childcare or who live with disabilities, especially as Jewish law considers pushing wheelchairs and buggies to be forms of carrying. Eruvim make a negligible impact to the lives of the wider community, but, when proposed, can cause concern for residents not aware of the inconspicuousness of eruvim. Several communities in London are currently considering eruvim and Mayoral leadership and support would be appreciated in settling local worries, where appropriate.

POLICY ASK: Through the planning regime, support the development of built faith infrastructure, including places of worships, schools and cultural centres.

POLICY ASK: Work with community-specific housing associations, including Jewish housing associations, to ensure that efforts to increase affordable housing in London are delivered in a community-sensitive way.

POLICY ASK: Work with communal representative bodies where appropriate to secure a positive conversation around development proposals.

POLICY ASK: Support the construction of eruvim where there is demand and help allay wider public concerns.

TRANSPORT

Transport choices continue to be important in linking Jewish residents to their communal infrastructure. In particular, vital school bus services should not be axed to avoid making life harder for young people. Meanwhile, the equalities impact of transport initiatives should be considered for new schemes. For instance, Jewish students often travel further to attend a suitable faith school.

While comprehensive and imaginative investment in transport choices is critical, there are particular routes that are of interest to the Jewish community. For example, the extension of the 210 bus route from Finsbury Park to Stamford Hill would be of great benefit to the community. Such an extension would link the two main Strictly Orthodox communities in Golders Green and Stamford Hill. The Jewish community has requested this since the start of the Greater London Authority and its realisation is long overdue.

Periodically, the 107, 142 and 292 bus routes that link the Jewish communities in Hertfordshire to those of north-west London come under threat. These should be preserved as they often link Jewish families together. Bus routes such as the 167, 667 and the 677 that link Jewish communities in Redbridge and Epping Forest should also be retained.

Transport initiatives such as proposed extensions of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), should be considered for their equalities' impacts on Jewish and other communities. This is particularly true for those communities who may have larger families and so may have fewer transport options available. A scrappage scheme should be strongly considered so as to mitigate potential harms of the scheme, particularly for those who are financially disadvantaged. Better public transport links around the outer zones will also be necessary if people are to be persuaded to drive less in these areas. Any proposal for future driving levies or transport initiatives based on arbitrary boundaries must take into account the effect this will have in dividing communities.

The introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods has been controversial in some areas. However, timely community conversations can help avoid or de-escalate tensions. It is worth investigating whether engaging residents through their faith communities would be a productive complement to, for example, ward-based structures.

Investment in sustainable forms of transport should not only include public transport, but also, car-sharing and non-car private options such as cycling and investment in charging points across the capital, including in areas with higher Jewish populations.

POLICY ASK: School bus services should be preserved.

POLICY ASK: Extend the 210 bus route past Finsbury Park to Stamford Hill to link together two of London's major Jewish communities.

POLICY ASK: Maintain the 107, 142, 167, 292, 667, and 677 bus routes.

POLICY ASK: Expansions of the ULEZ should be considered in terms of their equalities impacts, and mitigations such as scrappage schemes should be considered.

POLICY ASK: Any extension of the Congestion Charge or other proposed driving levies must be sensitive to the potential danger of splitting up communities.

POLICY ASK: Where appropriate, engage with faith communities to shape proposals such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

POLICY ASK: Extend investment in sustainable forms of transport into the outer areas of London including the areas with high Jewish populations.

SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTHCARE

Even in areas where the Greater London Authority has little formal power, the Mayor of London can play a key role in offering leadership to national and local government, setting the tone and priorities for London as a whole.

A key challenge for UK society is how to support an ageing population. Faith-based and culturally specific providers are vital for this, creating a familiar atmosphere for users that can combat loneliness and social isolation.

The Mayor can champion faith social care providers including Jewish social care providers, by encouraging boroughs to work across boundaries to ensure that such provision is available for service users, whether they have resided close to Jewish care facilities or not.

The GLA's online presence does a great job of signposting to support services. This signposting role should extend to Jewish organisations involved in social care, mental health and family support services.

We applaud the GLA's support for a London Living Wage as a welcome boost for the lowest-paid. At the same time, there must be a recognition that this has an impact on social care providers. Any commitment to raising wages must be matched by advocacy for increased governmental funding for social care in recognition of the increasing costs of provision.

At the end of life, Jewish communities, like Muslim communities, require burial to be as swift as possible. While most coroners show sensitivity to this, there have been instances in London where coroners have imposed unnecessary delays. The Mayor of London speaking out on such matters is much appreciated by communities.

POLICY ASK: The Mayor of London should lead on highlighting how the provision of culturally-sensitive care and welfare services is an important factor in ensuring the wellbeing and mental health of people who require support. In particular, City Hall should advocate for a recognition that increased costs associated with specialist Jewish social care provision represent value for money in delivering outcomes regarding wellbeing and combatting social isolation.

POLICY ASK: Ensure the GLA's online signposting includes reference to culturally- and faith-specific Jewish services in social care, mental health and family support services.

POLICY ASK: Advocate for increased spending on social care, to enable service providers to pay a living wage without forcing cuts to provision.

POLICY ASK: Speak up for faith-sensitive provision by coroners' services.

EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Formal education is another area where the Mayor can show leadership. Jewish schools are an important part of Jewish communal life, with more than two-thirds of Jewish children attending Jewish schools. This means that support for faith schools is a key priority for the Jewish community.

Jewish schools in London report having limited access to Mayoral initiatives due to lack of communication. It is critical that all schools, including Jewish schools, are aware of GLA projects in this area. Furthermore, support should be made available for training educators and for recruitment.

There is also a thriving Jewish nursery and childminder sector, whose premises are often located in communal institutions such as synagogues. Childcare affordability is a critical issue for the Jewish community as it is for the wider population.

Informal education is a cornerstone of the Jewish community. Jewish youth organisations build the self-confidence and interpersonal skills of young people, while transmitting Jewish identity to the next generation. Informal education is not just a young people's policy: It is an anti-crime policy, a community cohesion policy, and a mental health policy.

One challenge to the sector is that, while the rising expectations of child safeguarding are of critical importance, training can often be expensive and of variable quality and there is inadequate independent monitoring of whether that training is up to a good standard. The GLA could take a role in assessing local authority child safeguarding training and advocating for decreased costs. A kitemarking scheme could, in time, be extended to non-local authority providers.

There is also a lack of opportunities to share best practice across the informal education sector and if the Mayor of London could facilitate this, practitioners across the sector would benefit.

Holocaust education is important to the Jewish community. The GLA should encourage all London boroughs to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day in schools, and meaningfully implement the Holocaust element of the National Curriculum. Working with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, City Hall can make a positive contribution to this effort by bringing together local authorities to share best practice.

A significant opportunity for London exists in the form of the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre beside Parliament. We would want any future Mayor to give this important initiative their full backing.

Anti-discrimination training in schools is another vital tool to combat racism. Funded by MOPAC, Stand Up! Education Against Discrimination do important work to educate young people in schools right across the capital, and we ask that MOPAC continue to support this work.

Meanwhile, Jewish students at universities in the capital should be supported and defended from the antisemitism they sometimes face, as well as the intimidation they encounter in relation to extreme anti-Israel activity.

POLICY ASK: The GLA should continue to be supportive of faith schools including Jewish schools, paying due regard to their specific needs.

POLICY ASK: Provide accountability for local authority provided child safeguarding training in London, so that informal education providers can be assured of the quality of provision.

POLICY ASK: Support the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre beside Parliament. Bring together local authorities to share best practice on commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day.

POLICY ASK: MOPAC should continue to fund Stand Up! Education Against Discrimination, empowering young people to tackle hate crime and intolerance through anti-discrimination education in schools across London.

POLICY ASK: Raise awareness of the antisemitism that can be faced by Jewish students at London universities and call out incidents.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

London's Jewish culture and heritage is of profound importance both to the capital itself and to the international Jewish community. London is home to architectural gems like the New West End Synagogue and Bevis Marks Synagogue, while Jewish culture thrives in the capital with institutions such as the JW3 Jewish community centre, the Jewish Museum, the UK Jewish Film Festival, Jewish Book Week and Chanukah in the Square.

That history and culture tells a story about the Jewish community and also London as a whole – a world city, whose diversity and pluralism have been deeply embedded in its evolution. London has benefited enormously from the diverse groups that have made it their home. The history and culture of the capital's Jewish community is a clear testament to that.

We are pleased that a Heritage Strategy has been produced as part of the London Plan, and its explicit statement that London's heritage is a testament to its diversity, and should be preserved, among other things, to bring the history of the capital to its residents. Given how the centre of Jewish population has relocated to different parts of the capital over the last century, the day-to-day implementation of such a principle should reflect that stakeholders in heritage are not just local residents, but all those for whom that heritage tells an important story.

It is also important that the Culture at Risk team look at the heritage and culture of faith communities. Our shared heritage needs to be preserved through sympathetic redevelopment and commemoration.

Support for institutions that provide education on that heritage – such as the Jewish Museum – is critical.

POLICY ASK: Support London's flourishing Jewish cultural sector.

POLICY ASK: Ensure that the upcoming Heritage Strategy from the Mayor of London takes into account the heritage of all who have a stake in it, including from communities that no longer live in close proximity to a given area.

POLICY ASK: Ensure that the Culture at Risk team have an awareness of, and active interest in, preserving faith culture at risk.

SOCIAL ACTION

The Jewish community has a vibrant social action and social justice sector and is proud of organisations as diverse as World Jewish Relief, Tzedek, René Cassin, the Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE); and volunteering charities such as the Jewish Volunteering Network (JVN). Various synagogues and charities have dedicated themselves to supporting refugees, alleviating poverty and giving shelter to the homeless.

The Jewish community engages in an annual day of focused communal social action under the banner of Mitzvah Day, working with local authorities across the capital to support local causes. Mayoral backing for these initiatives elevates their profile, helping volunteer recruitment and increasing impact.

Volunteers require the investment of training, management and being properly resourced. Any additional funding into the field of volunteering is extremely worthwhile, because it has a clear 'multiplier effect'. We urge the GLA to build upon previous support given to charities to help them fully utilise their volunteer bases.

The plight of refugees is something close to the hearts of London's Jewish residents, many of whose families have had to flee from somewhere at some time. Given the Kindertransport scheme that saved Jewish children from the Holocaust, the plight of refugee children is particularly poignant. Local authorities can help by pledging resources and accommodation for refugees, and particularly for child refugees. City Hall can lead by rallying London's boroughs to this cause.

Through the Eco Synagogue project, the Board of Deputies and the Jewish religious denominations are encouraging synagogues to adopt best environmental practice and carry eco-friendly renovations, as the community wrestles with the challenge of climate change. We would welcome the support of the GLA in providing resources to local communities taking part in this initiative.

POLICY ASK: Support faith-based social action projects by supporting food banks and homeless shelters, including by taking part in Mitzvah Day.

POLICY ASK: Support charities to improve and develop volunteering to achieve their goals.

POLICY ASK: Rally London Boroughs to support the campaign to admit refugees, and especially child refugees, by pledging resources and accommodation.

POLICY ASK: Engage London's faith communities, including the Eco Synagogue project, in initiatives to tackle climate change.

ISRAEL

In the 21st century, Israel is a focal point for Jewish life worldwide. A plurality of Jews globally – more than 40 per cent – live in Israel. It is a key engine of Jewish life, the wellspring of Hebrew literature, culture and cuisine, as well as being of profound religious importance.

Not only does Israel play a leading role in the identity of Jewish Londoners, but it should be borne in mind that many will have close family and friends in Israel. Zionism, the belief in the Jewish people's right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland, became popular as a response to antisemitism, and Israel represents a place of safety to Jews and threats to its wellbeing impact on London's Jews. Israel's security can feel very imminent or personal to many of the capital's Jews, as they may have a grandchild who must spend their night in a bomb shelter during escalations of tension, or a niece, nephew or cousin undertaking national service in the army. Therefore, while the London Jewish community has wide range of views regarding the policies of the Israeli government, the Jewish community is, in a social sense, intertwined with Israel like never before. Engagement with Israeli culture plays a critical part in maintaining Jewish identity and passing it on to their children.

Efforts to target communal organisations from university Jewish societies or the Jewish Film Festival for engaging with Israel or having Israel content, have threatened Jewish communal life in the capital. The Mayor of London must stand against all attempts to shut down Jewish communal life, even when they are coated in the thin veneer of anti-Israel activity. As well as pushing back against divisive boycotts, City Hall should promote projects that unite communities, like the Invest in Peace project supported by the Board of Deputies. London's politicians must also take care not to use inflammatory language, particularly at times of conflict.

A more positive approach can be taken by organising trade and cultural missions to Israel. There is much to gain from an exchange in hi-tech innovation, financial services and culture. We also call on City Hall to engage with the municipalities of major Israeli cities.

POLICY ASK: Ensure that the tone and language of statements on foreign affairs do not unwittingly cause divisions between communities in your area.

POLICY ASK: Oppose divisive boycotts, protect Jewish and Israeli cultural events from intimidation and instead promote projects that unite communities in your area, including interfaith and inter-communal initiatives and coexistence projects.

POLICY ASK: Lead London trade and cultural missions to Israel.

The London Jewish Forum is an advocate for the capital's Jewish community, campaigning and influencing the public institutions affecting the lives of Jewish Londoners. Rooted within Jewish values, The JLF works across the community regardless of religious, cultural or political affiliations or beliefs and with our neighbours to advance the community's agenda.

The London Jewish Forum is a registered charity in England and Wales (Charity No. 1119590) and a private company limited by guarantee without share capital (No. 05720881).

The Board of Deputies of British Jews is the democratic and representative body for the UK's Jewish community. The Board of Deputies is the first port of call for Government, the media and others seeking to understand the Jewish community's interests and concerns.

Charitable activities with which the Board of Deputies is identified are funded by The Board of Deputies Charitable Foundation (Registered Charity No. 1058107), a company limited by guarantee and registered in England (No. 3239086).

The Jewish Leadership Council (JLC) connects and coordinates the Jewish charitable sector; strengthens and supports leadership across its community; and magnifies and amplifies the individual voices and collective voice of our member organisations.

The JLC is a registered Charity in England and Wales number 1115343. The JLC is a company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No: 5742840."

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