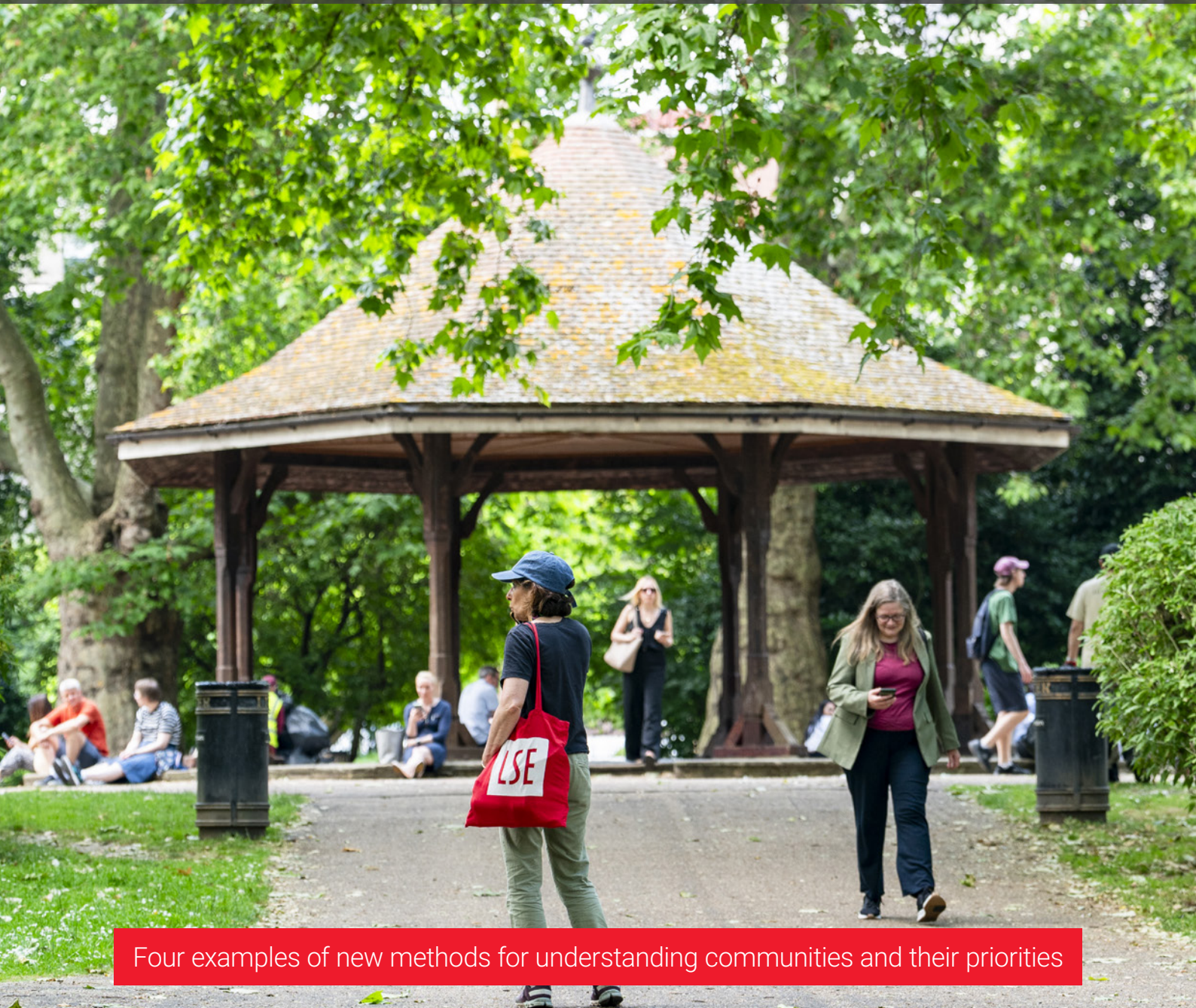




THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE

How can policymakers rebuild consensus for action on climate change?



Four examples of new methods for understanding communities and their priorities

Introduction

Action on climate change is only sustainable if people support it. 84% of people in Britain believe in climate change ([YouGov](#), April 2025) and 72% are worried about its impact on the UK ([Ipsos](#), April 2025), but recently polling showed just 16% identified it as one of their top three concerns compared to 58% for immigration, 51% for the economy and 29% for health ([YouGov](#), 2025).

As the introduction of the Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in London have shown, **policies with clear environmental and practical benefits can still face significant opposition** from groups when they do not see their concerns or needs reflected in the changes. Division and distrust make it harder to take action and **new ways of communicating are needed**, rooted in an understanding of the hopes and needs of communities.

At the London School of Economics and Political Science, **our academics are at the forefront of this work** - helping policymakers understand how they can build, or rebuild, broad coalitions of support for action on climate change. As well as identifying where and how things go wrong, they are revealing how policymakers can lead consensuses for change.

Here are some examples



Deliberating Sufficiency In Transport: Fair car use budgets for London

Dr Philipp Rode, Dr Alexandra Gomes and colleagues at LSE Cities

Reducing car use in cities and towns offers environmental benefits like improved air quality and practical benefits like safer, quieter streets and better public spaces. Local authorities in London are experimenting with limiting car use in residential neighbourhoods but they face pushback from some residents who drive because they see the changes as unfair.

In their paper and research, academics at LSE Cities found that it is possible to create transport policies aiming to reduce car use that are seen as fair. They showed that frequent car drivers in London are open to limiting car use in the capital when they are engaged in the debate through deliberation.

As well as sharing the deliberative model the researchers used, the paper shows the insights they gained: for example, people can reach a consensus around limiting car use when the link between an individual's own car use and how much congestion this causes is made clear. They can also collectively identify groups who should be prioritised for car use privileges.

Using the deliberative methods and tools developed in the research, LSE Cities has recently been invited to help Hackney Council engage with residents in their borough to inform the development of their 10-year transport strategy.

Email c.b.hicks@lse.ac.uk or read the paper [here](#) to find out more.

Rethinking Green Transitions: A youth-led peer research project in Islington

Imogen Hamilton-Jones at LSE Cities, in partnership with young peer researchers and Islington Council

The climate crisis affects us all, but young people will face its consequences for the longest. Despite this, just 9% of British 18–24-year-olds believe that they significantly input into climate decision-making (YouGov 2023).

This report draws on a peer research project led by four young researchers, in collaboration with LSE Cities and Islington Council. The research explored how young people in Islington experience and imagine the green transition, and how climate action can better reflect youth priorities.

Through interviews, workshops, creative methods and a survey, the team engaged 158 young people and 20 policymakers to understand what makes a neighbourhood truly “liveable.” The findings and recommendations highlight the importance of linking climate action to social justice, prioritising safety, and improving access to green and social spaces.

In November 2025, a new LSE-funded project will build on this work and use peer research to build a pan-London network for youth-led climate action. Please get in touch if you are a young person, researcher or policymaker who would like to get involved.

Email i.hamilton-jones@lse.ac.uk or read the report [here](#) to find out more.



Faith In Local Climate Policy: Building inclusive and locally grounded climate policies

Kristian Noll and colleagues at the LSE Faith Centre



Engaging with faith communities is a powerful opportunity for catalysing meaningful climate action, but faith-based perspectives are often overlooked by policymakers. In London, where over 60% of residents identify with a religion, this gap in understanding and communication is particularly significant.

To help bridge it, the LSE Religion and Global Society (RGS) unit is working with five London boroughs to introduce new ways of engaging with faith communities on climate change through the language of their religion.

Using an approach developed through [research by LSE's Faith Centre](#), the RGS is organising a series of workshops bringing together council representatives, faith leaders, borough residents, businesses and academics.

They will discuss how religious ideas and texts inform perceptions of, and responses to, climate change in London, and how climate policies can be designed in a faith-inclusive way. The team will use these conversations to develop a toolkit for other local authorities to use when connecting with their residents on climate change and other challenges.

Email k.m.noll@lse.ac.uk or visit the website and find out more [here](#).



Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, conspiracy theories and how competing forms of legitimacy can polarise public debate in data-driven public consultation

Dr Alison Powell at LSE's Department of Media and Communications

Consultations are an essential part of how councils engage with and understand the views of their residents, though since the Covid-19 pandemic they have increasingly been conducted online and they have emphasised collecting and relying on quantifiable, objective data.

During the pandemic, a central London borough launched a consultation on a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN). Dr Powell's paper examined this consultation to consider the flaws in the design of online consultations, particularly when they do not make adequate space for legitimate strong, negative feelings. The paper shows that, in response to this specific consultation, residents who did not feel their opposition would be heard instead created and used a private Facebook group.

The paper explores the consequences of this: how residents created their own data to support their perspectives and challenge the LTNs; how the discourse of this group became increasingly extreme and polarised; and how they found their views echoed in wider, negative societal discourses.

It also shows how the design of consultations can be improved to prevent this breakdown in conversation and what a better system for productive disagreement might look like.

Email a.powell@lse.ac.uk or read about Dr Powell's research [here](#).

This document was prepared by LSE's Public Affairs team.

If you would like to know more about any of this research or learn about other London-related research undertaken at LSE, please contact a.ashurst@lse.ac.uk.

LSE Public Affairs

The London School of Economics
and Political Science
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE