

WHICH SUSTAINABILITY?

Policy Glossary - *Short definitions of each policy in the classification exercise*

MOBILITY

	Policy	Glossary
1	Build more highways to reduce congestion	A transport policy that expands road infrastructure on the assumption that more lanes will reduce traffic jams. In practice, new roads generate new demand ('induced demand'), leading to more cars and more emissions.
2	Subsidise the purchase of private electric cars	Government financial incentives (tax credits, rebates) to encourage consumers to buy electric vehicles instead of petrol or diesel cars.
3	Set strict emission standards for new vehicles (e.g. Euro 7)	Regulatory limits on the amount of pollutants (CO ₂ , NO _x , particulates) that new vehicles are allowed to emit. Euro 7 is the latest EU standard.
4	Make public transport free for all residents	Eliminating fares on buses, trams, and metro systems so that all residents can use them at no direct cost, funded through general taxation.
5	Invest massively in protected cycling infrastructure	Large-scale public investment in separated bike lanes, bike parking, and cycling networks, physically protected from car traffic.
6	Ban private cars from the city centre	A policy that prohibits privately owned cars from entering a defined urban zone, typically allowing only public transport, bicycles, emergency vehicles, and deliveries.
7	Implement a 15-minute city plan ⚡	An urban planning model where all essential services (work, school, health, shopping, leisure) are reachable within 15 minutes by foot or bicycle from any home.
8	Allow Uber and ride-hailing with no regulation ⚡	Permitting app-based private transport companies (Uber, Lyft, Bolt) to operate without fare controls, labour protections, or licensing requirements.
9	Tax frequent flyers progressively	A tax system where the rate increases with the number of flights a person takes per year: the first flight is taxed lightly, subsequent flights are taxed heavily.
10	Set a personal annual carbon budget for travel	Each citizen receives a fixed annual allowance of carbon emissions for travel. Once the budget is used up, further travel requires purchasing additional credits or is restricted.
11	Subsidise the expansion of low-cost airlines ⚡	Government financial support (subsidies, tax exemptions, cheap airport fees) to help budget airlines expand routes, increase flights, and lower ticket prices.

ENERGY

#	Policy	Glossary
12	Subsidise fossil fuel extraction (oil, gas, coal)	Government financial support to companies that extract and process fossil fuels, through direct payments, tax breaks, or below-market royalty rates.

13	Deregulate the energy market to increase competition	Removing government controls on energy prices, providers, and infrastructure, allowing private companies to compete freely in the energy market.
14	Create a feed-in tariff for renewable energy producers	A government guarantee to buy renewable energy at a fixed, favourable price, giving solar, wind, and other green producers financial security.
15	Implement a carbon tax on all fossil fuel use	A tax levied on the carbon content of fossil fuels, making polluting energy sources more expensive and encouraging a shift to cleaner alternatives.
16	Launch a national green hydrogen strategy ⚡	A government plan to develop hydrogen produced using renewable energy as a clean fuel for industry, transport, and heating, often involving large infrastructure investments.
17	Give legal priority to community energy cooperatives over corporations	A law that grants community-owned energy cooperatives preferential access to the grid, permits, or subsidies over large private companies.
18	Declare energy a public good and ban privatisation	A legal or constitutional measure that defines energy as a common good managed by the state or community, prohibiting its sale to private companies.
19	Create an energy poverty programme (free energy for low-income)	A public programme that provides free or heavily subsidised energy to households below a defined income threshold, ensuring no one goes without heating or electricity.
20	Set a national cap on total energy consumption ⚡	A legally binding limit on the total amount of energy a country can consume per year, regardless of the source (fossil or renewable).
21	Build new nuclear power plants ⚡	Constructing new facilities that generate electricity through nuclear fission, producing low-carbon energy but generating radioactive waste and requiring massive capital investment.
22	Ban all advertising for fossil fuel companies	A law prohibiting oil, gas, and coal companies from advertising their products or brand, similar to existing bans on tobacco advertising.

FOOD

#	Policy	Glossary
23	Subsidise industrial agriculture and large monocultures	Government payments to large-scale farms that grow single crops over vast areas, using intensive mechanisation, chemical fertilisers, and pesticides.
24	Allow corporations to patent seeds (GMO patents) ⚡	Granting private companies intellectual property rights over genetically modified seeds, making it illegal for farmers to save, replant, or share patented varieties.
25	Deregulate pesticide approval to speed up innovation ⚡	Reducing the scientific testing and regulatory review required before new pesticides can be sold, in the name of faster market access and agricultural innovation.
26	Fund the EU Farm-to-Fork strategy	Financial support for the EU's plan to make food systems fairer, healthier, and more environmentally friendly,

		including targets for organic farming, reduced pesticides, and shorter supply chains.
27	Certify and label organic products (EU Bio) ⚡	A certification system that identifies food produced without synthetic pesticides, artificial fertilisers, or GMOs, allowing consumers to choose organic products through labelling.
28	Subsidise agrivoltaics (solar panels over fields) ⚡	Government funding for the installation of solar panels above agricultural fields, allowing simultaneous energy production and farming on the same land.
29	Protect farmers' right to save and exchange seeds	A law guaranteeing that farmers can legally save seeds from their harvest, replant them, and share them with other farmers, resisting corporate seed patents.
30	Support community-supported agriculture with public funds	Government funding for CSA schemes, where consumers pay farmers directly in advance for a share of the harvest, sharing the risks and rewards of farming.
31	Implement land reform: redistribute large landholdings	A policy that breaks up large agricultural estates and redistributes land to small farmers, landless workers, or community cooperatives.
32	Pass a Food Sovereignty law	A law establishing the right of peoples and communities to define their own food and agriculture policies, prioritising local production and ecological farming over global trade rules.
33	Ban industrial animal farming entirely ⚡	A complete legal prohibition on factory farming – large-scale confined animal feeding operations – requiring all animal husbandry to meet strict welfare and ecological standards, or cease.
34	Mandate that all schools serve only local, seasonal food	A law requiring school canteens to source food exclusively from local farms and to serve only produce that is in season, eliminating imported and out-of-season ingredients.
35	Fund research into lab-grown meat ⚡	Government funding for scientific research into producing meat from animal cells in laboratories, without raising or slaughtering animals.

WATER

#	Policy	Glossary
36	Privatise the city water supply	Selling the ownership or management of a city's water infrastructure (pipes, treatment plants, distribution) to private companies.
37	Allow companies to buy water extraction rights ⚡	A system where private companies can purchase the legal right to extract water from rivers, aquifers, or lakes for commercial use (bottling, agriculture, industry).
38	Set water efficiency standards for appliances	Regulations requiring household appliances (washing machines, dishwashers, toilets) to use no more than a specified amount of water per cycle.
39	Install smart water meters in all homes ⚡	Equipping every household with digital meters that measure water use in real time, enabling precise billing, leak detection, and consumption monitoring.

40	Build public drinking fountains in every neighbourhood	A municipal programme to install free public water fountains throughout the city, ensuring universal access to clean drinking water in public spaces.
41	Write into the constitution that water is a human right	A constitutional amendment declaring access to clean water a fundamental human right, creating a legal obligation for the state to guarantee universal access.
42	Hold a referendum to ban water privatisation (Italy 2011)	A direct democratic vote (as occurred in Italy in 2011) in which citizens decide whether water services should remain publicly owned and managed, rejecting privatisation.
43	Give legal personhood to a river (New Zealand) ⚡	A legal framework (as applied to the Whanganui River in New Zealand in 2017) that grants a river the same legal rights as a person, meaning it can sue and be represented in court.
44	Ban water-intensive crops in drought-prone regions	A law prohibiting the cultivation of crops that require large amounts of water (e.g. rice, almonds, avocados) in areas that suffer from chronic water scarcity.

HOUSING

#	Policy	Glossary
45	Deregulate construction permits to speed up development	Removing or weakening planning regulations, environmental impact assessments, and building permits to allow faster, cheaper construction.
46	Offer tax breaks for real estate developers	Government tax reductions or exemptions given to companies that build residential or commercial property, intended to stimulate housing supply.
47	Require green energy efficiency standards for new buildings	Regulations requiring new constructions to meet minimum energy performance criteria (insulation, heating systems, renewable energy integration).
48	Subsidise home insulation and heat pump installation ⚡	Government grants or tax credits to help homeowners improve insulation and replace gas boilers with electric heat pumps, reducing energy consumption and emissions.
49	Build social housing with ecological materials	Public construction of affordable rental housing using sustainable building materials (wood, recycled materials, natural insulation), combining social and ecological goals.
50	Implement strict rent control in cities	Legal limits on how much landlords can charge for rent and how much they can increase it, protecting tenants from market-driven displacement.
51	Create community land trusts (collectively owned land)	A model where land is owned collectively by a nonprofit trust and removed permanently from the market, while buildings on it can be individually owned or rented at affordable rates.
52	Regulate Airbnb to protect housing for residents ⚡	Laws limiting the number of days a property can be rented on short-term platforms like Airbnb, or requiring permits, to prevent the conversion of residential housing into tourist accommodation.

53	Set maximum square metres per person in new construction ⚡	A building regulation that limits the maximum floor area per occupant in new residential construction, preventing the building of excessively large homes.
54	Ban real estate speculation (buying to resell, not to live in)	A law prohibiting the purchase of residential property purely for resale profit, requiring that housing be used as a home rather than treated as a financial asset.

WASTE

#	Policy	Glossary
55	Allow exporting waste to developing countries	Permitting companies and municipalities to ship waste (plastic, electronic, hazardous) to countries in the Global South for processing or disposal.
56	Set mandatory recycling targets for municipalities	Legal requirements for local governments to recycle a specified percentage of municipal waste by a given deadline.
57	Pass an Extended Producer Responsibility law	A law making manufacturers financially and/or physically responsible for the end-of-life disposal or recycling of their products and packaging.
58	Implement a deposit-return system for bottles	A system where consumers pay a small deposit when buying bottled drinks, which is refunded when the empty bottle is returned for recycling or reuse.
59	Pass a Right to Repair law ⚡	A law requiring manufacturers to make spare parts, tools, and repair manuals available to consumers and independent repair shops, enabling products to be fixed rather than replaced.
60	Ban single-use plastics completely	A total legal prohibition on the production, import, and sale of disposable plastic items (bags, straws, cutlery, packaging) that are designed to be used once and discarded.
61	Create municipal zero-waste programmes ⚡	City-level programmes that aim to eliminate all waste sent to landfill or incineration, through radical reduction, reuse, composting, and recycling at the municipal level.
62	Set a national cap on total material consumption ⚡	A legally binding limit on the total amount of raw materials (metals, minerals, biomass, fossil fuels) a country can consume per year.
63	Ban planned obsolescence (products designed to break)	A law prohibiting manufacturers from deliberately designing products to fail or become obsolete after a set period, requiring durable and repairable design.
64	Tax all advertising for non-essential consumer goods ⚡	A tax on advertising spending for products classified as non-essential (luxury goods, fast fashion, gadgets, etc.), making it more expensive to stimulate demand.