

Nicky Gavron Biography for London Forum – October 2021

As an elected politician since 1986, Nicky Gavron has a track record in developing integrated land-use, housing, transport and environmental policy at every level of government, from neighbourhood to national. Her working style is collaborative and she has benefited from a long association with the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies.

Pre elected politics

Nicky came to London as a student and trained as an Historian of Art and Architecture (BA honours). After graduating, Nicky taught in Camberwell and St Martin's School of Art.

In the 1970s, alongside teaching part time and bringing up four children, she set up community groups and was centrally involved in establishing and developing Jacksons Lane Community and Arts Centre on the Archway Road. From this, she went on to establish the London Association of Arts Centres and the Arts and Urban Regeneration Group, amongst other projects. She then became vice chair of the London Arts Board and developed planning policy for the Arts.

During the late 70s and early 80s, Nicky cut her political teeth fighting the successful campaign to stop the A1 (Archway Road) becoming an urban motorway.

Elected politics

Nicky was elected as a local politician in 1986 for Archway Ward, Haringey. As a councillor, for the next 16 years she chaired area housing committees, development control, planning and technical and environmental services.

From '89-'94 she was Deputy Chair of the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC), becoming Chair in '94. In this role, she commissioned research and formulated strategies to create a more sustainable London, including on congestion charging and affordable housing. During this time, Nicky also led for LPAC on the London and South East Regional Planning Conference (SERPLAN).

In the late 90s, she developed policy at a national level as the first chair of the Local Government Association (LGA)'s planning committee, chair of the National Planning Forum and as a member of both the government's Integrated Transport Commission and subsequently the Sustainable Development Commission.

From '89, Nicky was involved in shaping the functions, form, style and size of a new democratically elected London government. In 2000 she was elected a London Assembly Member and became the first Deputy Mayor of London. She worked closely with Mayor Livingstone to set up the working processes and policy frameworks the Greater London Authority. She led on the first London Plan, which set out the vision and long-term policies

to make London an exemplary sustainable world city. Leading London's response to climate change, she introduced policies and programmes to reduce CO2 emissions across energy, water, waste, transport and sustainable design and construction. Her initiatives include establishing and developing C40 Cities, a network of the world's large cities collaborating to cut carbon. She continued her work on tackling climate change as a member of the London Sustainable Development Commission and through key advisory roles, including for the European Commission.

Since 2008, she has been chair/deputy chair of the cross-party Planning and Housing Committee and subsequently Planning Committee. She led the committee in instigating investigations, critiquing national and mayoral policy documents and making policy recommendations on a wide range of topics; these include tall buildings, public space, town centres and highstreets, neighbourhood planning and planning reforms. She also led the London Assembly consultation response to the new London Plan and made recommendations on amendments at numerous sessions of the Examination in Public of the London Plan.

Having authored the report "Designed, Sealed, Delivered—The contribution of offsite manufactured homes to solving London's housing crisis" in 2017, she continues to promote modern methods of construction and is particularly involved in encouraging the use of biobased materials to reduce embodied carbon in the building industry.

Nicky is internationally recognised for her work on urban planning and the environment. Having stepped down from the GLA in May 2021, she continues to advise cities and city networks.