

Anne-Marie Robinson

Principal Policy Manager

**Royal
Geographical
Society**

with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning



Job title: Principal Policy Manager

Organisation: Greater London Authority

Location: London, UK

How did you get to where you are now?

Following on from gaining my BA Geography degree at the University of Leicester, I studied for an MA in Environment and Development at King's College London, which included an internship at an environmental justice NGO.

This set me up for my first job at the Sustainable Development Commission where I advised central government departments on their sustainability strategies. I learnt a huge amount about how government works and how policy is made, which led me to five great years at Ofgem working on implementing the government's renewable electricity schemes. I'm now in the Zero Carbon Policy Team at the Greater London Authority (GLA) which sits within the wider Environment Team. I write and implement the Mayor's policies to make London, the city I was born and grew up in, a cleaner, greener place to live.

What do you do as part of your role?

My team are responsible for leading the Mayor's response to the climate emergency by making London a zero carbon city by 2050. My role is to make sure all new major developments in London are complying with our ambitious zero carbon targets as well as supporting London's boroughs to implement their own zero carbon pathways.

In a typical week I'll be writing briefings for the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor, meeting with developers on how to ensure their housing scheme complies with our energy policies and attending meetings at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on how the national policy framework for decarbonising the UK is evolving. It's a political environment so it's fast-paced and you never know quite what each day will bring.

What skills and characteristics do you need for this role, apart from geographical knowledge?

You need the ability to be flexible and adapt quickly as priorities change. I'm naturally a planner and a thinker but this role has really honed my skills in thinking on my feet. I still like a good project plan though!

How does geography feature in your work/ what difference does it make?

Geography is fundamental. Developing and delivering effective energy policy requires an ability to consider potential impacts, not just from a carbon perspective, but across all areas of the GLA's Environment Team's responsibilities which covers issues such as air quality, green infrastructure and fuel poverty. Geography enables you to see these impacts in an interconnected way and working within the GLA's Environment Team allows us to do this in practice.



What do you enjoy most about your job?

Being able to deliver ambitious policies to make the city I grew up in, and where most of my family live, a better place to live.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to go in to this career?

It's increasingly competitive to get into a role in climate and energy policy, so find ways to make yourself stand out. That could be through volunteering locally for an environmental cause, undertaking further study or interning at an organisation with a focus on policy and research. Being able to write clearly, convincingly (and quickly) is one of the most important skills in a policy and research job, so take every opportunity to practice writing and get feedback on how you can improve.

Why did you choose geography? Why should others choose geography?

Geography has always fascinated me because it's about how the natural world and humans interact and the challenges this results in. There is no bigger challenge facing us at the moment than climate change and geography helps us to understand the impacts this will have, the trade-offs that will need to be made and how we can best respond. As the impacts of climate change become ever more real, we need governments, businesses and individuals to have a better understanding of what we can do to limit carbon emissions across the economy fairly. I can't think of a better subject than geography to prepare graduates for the challenges ahead.