



# LOCAL AUTHORITY CLIMATE PLAN CHECKLIST

FOR DEVELOPING AND REVIEWING ACTION PLANS



Centre for Alternative Technology  
Canolfan y Dechnoleg Amgen

# Introduction

Whether we can limit global warming to 1.5°C will depend on what happens between now and 2030. 74% of UK local authorities have recognised the severity of the crisis by declaring a climate emergency. The next step is to turn these declarations into effective action.

This Checklist has been developed by [Climate Emergency UK](#), [Friends of the Earth](#), [Centre for Alternative Technology](#) & [Ashden](#). Local Authorities can use this Checklist to draw up an ambitious, comprehensive and robust Climate & Ecological Emergency Action Plan, while community groups can assess the ambition of their local authorities' plan.

*A climate emergency action plan differs from a normal climate action plan because it recognises that we are in a time of crisis. It acknowledges that the climate crisis poses an immediate threat and plans for rapid action.<sup>1</sup>*

Action at the local level is essential to tackling the climate and ecological emergencies. Local Authorities can drive reductions in emissions across their whole area. This is because of their unique insight into, and their relationship with, local communities; their service delivery and regulatory functions; and their power to convene others. In doing so, local authorities can deliver many co-benefits for their communities.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee on Climate Change, in their 'Local Authorities and the Sixth carbon Budget report'<sup>3</sup>, stated that "More than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions – decisions that are made at a local and individual level. Many of these decisions depend on having supporting infrastructure and systems in place. Local authorities have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas."

Increasing resilience to climate change can also reduce costs from extreme weather incidents. Human health and wellbeing are dependent on a healthy planet. The Covid-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated this. National and local recovery plans must bring about a green and fair recovery - joining up action on climate, nature, health and prosperity. Plans should also address environmental inequalities. BAME and poorer communities experience worse air pollution, less access to green space, and are less able to respond to extreme weather caused by climate change.

There is strong public support for local, place-based action. 66% of Britons believe that climate change is as serious as Covid-19.<sup>4</sup> The majority also want to see climate action prioritised in the economic recovery.<sup>5</sup> The UK Climate Assembly concluded that there should not be a 'one size fits all' approach to important issues such as transport and housing.<sup>6</sup> Communities must be able to shape solutions to the climate crisis and take the lead in doing so.

Tackling the climate crisis will impact people's lives and change our lifestyles. Local Authorities must involve local residents, businesses, community organisations and service providers in the development of the Action Plan. Their skills, ideas and perspectives will result in better outcomes

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<sup>1</sup> Definition adapted from [Climate Emergency Action Planning - Manual for Local Authorities, Pg. 21](#).

<sup>2</sup> These benefits include improved public health, lower energy bills, reduced inequalities, a healthier environment and thriving local economies. For more information on climate co-benefits read Ashdens Toolkit here - <https://ashden.org/climate-action-co-benefits-toolkit/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/local-authorities-and-the-sixth-carbon-budget/>

<sup>4</sup> Ipsos poll, 22/04/2020

[https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring\\_a\\_Climate\\_Emergency\\_76-end.pdf](https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring_a_Climate_Emergency_76-end.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> The UK climate assembly was commissioned by Six House of Commons Select Committees

<https://www.climateassembly.uk/report/read/covid19-recovery-and-the-path-to-net-zero.html>

and more creative solutions. Initiatives are more likely to be effective when potential issues are addressed at an early stage. Engagement also allows local authorities to demonstrate the co-benefits of action.

Local authorities will be vital allies in the race to the Government's net-zero target. Many have shown a willingness to act. Over 300 local authorities have declared a climate emergency and 115 have committed to net-zero for their whole area by 2030.<sup>7</sup> Action Plans, with varying levels of ambition and detail, continue to be written and refined<sup>8</sup>. The UK Government must support local authorities with extra resources and powers if they are to meet their targets. This is even more important post Covid-19. Although there has been more government funding to deal with the crisis, local authorities are in a vulnerable position. New responsibilities and greater community needs are combined with significant financial uncertainty. Local authorities have seen huge new spending demands with normal revenue streams reduced. Action Plans will have to demonstrate understanding of these constraints as well as the need to secure the necessary support from the Government for effective local climate action.<sup>9</sup>

## From Declaration to Action - Using the checklist

This Checklist provides local authorities and communities with a list they can refer to when creating their own Action Plan. There are three sections, which contain actions and points to consider when developing your Plan. At the end is a list of resources that other local authorities used to develop their Plan. A list of headings is available [here](#).

Action Plans will be living documents. Local authorities will need to revise their Plans as the climate and environmental crisis develops, targets are met, and new technologies emerge. Local authority officers and residents can use this Checklist to see how existing Plans measure up and which areas need strengthening as their Action Plans come up for review.

Section 3 links to documents containing specific actions that local authorities can take to reduce emissions. The documents focus on different areas under local authorities control or influence, such as planning, housing and transport. Examples of good practice are also provided. Any reference to a specific organisation or method is there for reference only. It does not represent an endorsement.

Your local authority may not be able to impact all areas covered in this Checklist. This depends on which part of the UK you are in,<sup>10</sup> and your local authority type, responsibilities, populations, geography and budget.<sup>11</sup> Despite their differences, all local authorities have many areas of influence and control. The plan needs to consider three scopes of emissions the local authority can impact:<sup>12</sup>

**Scope 1 Emissions:** Greenhouse Gas emissions from sources located within the local authority boundary. These include:

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<sup>7</sup> See Councils that have declared climate emergencies and what date their net zero emission target is set for at Climate Emergency UK: <https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/list-of-councils/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://data.climateemergency.uk>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/documents/blueprint-accelerating-climate-action-and-green-recovery-local-level>

<sup>10</sup> Councils in Northern Ireland have different authorities than their counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales. Friends of the Earth has a climate action plan providing NI specific points: [FOR NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCILS](#)

<sup>11</sup> The UK Government has a breakdown of different types of councils and their responsibilities here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-government-structure-and-elections>

<sup>12</sup> The Carbon Trust offers services that help organisations understand and reduce their emissions: <https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/briefing-what-are-scope-3-emissions>

- **Council only:** Council's direct emissions, e.g. emissions from Council buildings, fleet vehicles and equipment, and land use.
- **Whole District/County:** Emissions within the local authority boundary e.g. transportation, privately owned buildings, stationary energy; agriculture and land use; in-boundary waste etc.

**Scope 2 Emissions:** Greenhouse Gas emissions occurring due to the use of grid-supplied electricity, heat, and/or cooling for Council buildings and services and within the city boundary.

**Scope 3 Emissions:** Includes all Greenhouse Gas emissions that occur outside the city boundary as a result of activities taking place within the city boundary. This includes:

- **Council only:** Emissions generated by purchased goods and services; Business travel, commuting, grey fleet (employee owned cars claiming mileage back by expenses; Waste disposal for contracted out waste processing; Use of sold products and services (emissions related to local people's use of local authority services); Investments; Leased assets, franchises and outsourcing (all contractor emissions).
- **Whole District/County:** Emissions generated by out of boundary transportation (travel by commuters, railways and airports); out of boundary waste; resident's diet and consumption; transmission and distribution of electricity, heating and/or cooling.<sup>13</sup>

This Checklist is a living document, and is being constantly updated. If you have ideas of how to improve it, or would like to contribute examples of good practice, get in contact with us at [checklist@climateemergency.uk](mailto:checklist@climateemergency.uk)

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<sup>13</sup> Emissions for "Council only" taken from Local Authorities and Sixth Carbon Budget, pg 49.

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/local-authorities-and-the-sixth-carbon-budget/>

"Whole District/County" Emissions adapted from the *Greenhouse Gas Protocol for Cities*

<https://ghgprotocol.org/greenhouse-gas-protocol-accounting-reporting-standard-cities> with the report found here [Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories](#).



# Contents

Introduction	1
<b>Section 1. Creating and Presenting the Plan</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1. Community Engagement and Plan Development	6
1.2. Structure and Delivery	7
1.3. Scope	8
1.4. Costing the Plan	9
<b>Section 2. Components of a Strong Action Plan</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1. Emissions	12
2.1.1. Measuring and Setting Emission Targets	12
2.1.2. Climate Impacts	15
2.2. Resilient, Socially Inclusive and Healthy Communities	16
2.2.1. Diversity & Social Inclusion	16
2.2.2. Climate Resilience	17
2.2.3. Public Health	18
2.2.4. Education, Skills and Training	19
2.3. Local Authority Commitment	20
2.3.1. Political Commitment	20
2.3.2. Local Authorities Leading by Example	20
2.4. Delivering the Action Plan	21
2.4.1. Governance & Partnerships	22
2.4.2. Funding	22
2.4.3. Timelines and Momentum	23
2.4.4. Monitoring	24
<b>Section 3. Action Areas</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Section 4. Resources</b>	<b>29</b>

## Section 1. Creating and Presenting the Plan



This section covers the minimum required to develop and launch an effective Plan. There are three main criteria for Action Plans to be effective.

1. Local authorities should develop Plans in collaboration with those who will be affected by it.
2. The objectives of the Plan should be clear.
3. Plans should be explicit about what the local authority can and cannot do.

## 1.1. Community Engagement and Plan Development

What does it look like to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan for a local authority?

Local authorities must resolve a number of questions. Who should be consulted? How should the community be involved? And what are things to consider during the development stage?

Plan development should:

- ❑ **Be led by a senior lead officer with a cabinet member/committee responsible for developing and delivering the Plan.** Strong leadership is critical for plans to be carried from development through to deployment and delivery. Regular public progress reports should be the responsibility of the lead officer and councillor.
- ❑ **Start with an honest assessment of the local authorities previous climate action.** Previous plans will have been created and implemented. Reviewing previous action is essential to understand what has or hasn't worked in the past. It will also provide an understanding for Councillors and officers on the requirements to reach net-zero.
- ❑ **Include strong engagement within and across the council.** It is critical to ensure that there is buy in from all the local authorities departments. For example, the heads of finance and procurement are key players in planning and delivering Action Plans. Strong engagement will also support those who are working to deliver the Plan and may result in more creative and effective actions.
- ❑ **Engage a representative cross section of the community.**<sup>14</sup> Local authorities can engage residents in many ways. This includes through citizen assemblies, citizen juries, online platforms, climate commissions or citizen task forces. The Plan must also be clear about how people can get involved. Those consulted should represent the diversity, disability, ages, incomes, and geography of the constituency.<sup>15</sup> The Action Plan should include how the community was consulted and how their feedback has been integrated. It should also be clear how the community can get involved in implementing and updating the Plan. The Resources Section contains more materials on community engagement.
- ❑ **Establish collaborative partnerships and secure commitments from different sectors within the community.** Sectors should include: the voluntary, the educational, the health, faith organisations, businesses (large and SME) and anchor institutions. These relationships can take a variety of forms. One such platform is Place Based Climate Commissions.<sup>16</sup> They provide a model for active partnerships. The local authority should also

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<sup>14</sup> Ashden has a toolkit on resident engagement for local authorities:

<https://ashden.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CAC-TOOLKIT-CHAPTER-6.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Birmingham has a Route to Zero task force of people from a wide range of backgrounds, parties, and ages who are developing recommendations for Birmingham's climate action plan: [The Route to Zero \(R20\) Taskforce | Climate emergency](#)

Devon will have a youth parliament that will help develop their climate action plan:

<https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-carbon-plan/>

<https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/greener-devon/>

<sup>16</sup> PCAN (Place-Based Climate Action Network) has supported a range of local authorities in launching climate commission partnerships in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland:

<https://pcancities.org.uk/climate-commissions>

find out how institutions are reducing their own emissions, for instance through initiatives like Greener NHS. This will ensure the council Action Plan forms part of a holistic strategy.

- **Identify the workforce needed to deliver the Action Plan.** The local authority should begin identifying and quantifying the jobs, skills, re-training and up-skilling needed to deliver an ambitious Action Plan. Engagement with local training and education providers will be essential in development and implementation. The local authority can also work to integrate this with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Combined Authorities, with particular reference to their Strategic Economic Plans and Local Industrial Strategies.
- **Be clear about the involvement of third parties.** Local authorities may choose to use a consulting firm or other third party to assist them in developing the Plan, or parts of it. Their involvement and processes should be clearly referenced.

## 1.2. Structure and Delivery

Reaching net-zero will transform our communities. While there is no 'right way', Action Plans should be structured and delivered in a transparent, readable, accessible and exciting manner.

Recommendations:

- **There is a Climate Emergency section of the local authority website that is clearly signposted from the homepage.** A good Climate Emergency section will:
  - o Contain the Plan, supporting documents and a link to the minutes of the meeting where it was approved.
  - o Outline what actions are being taken and regularly update on progress.
  - o Demonstrate how people can get involved, using case studies where possible.
  - o Provide resources on how people can reduce their own carbon and ecological footprint.<sup>17</sup>
  - o Provide information about costing, budgeting and funding.
- **Present a positive vision of what net-zero looks like for the area.** This could include: quiet safe streets, warm homes, green jobs, equity and social cohesion, community resilience, healthier people, and more local consumption keeping wealth within the community.<sup>18</sup> This reframes the climate conversation from giving things up to strengthening and improving communities.
- **Accessibility is at the heart of presentation.** Plans need to be accessible for a range of disabilities.<sup>19</sup> Avoid jargon where possible and, if jargon is used, ensure it is defined. It can help to include a glossary.

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<sup>17</sup> South Hams District Council links to a climate and biodiversity emergency action website from their homepage. The dedicated website is easy to use. It has an overview of council actions, ways to get involved, and actions residents, businesses, and organisations can take: <https://www.climatechange.southhams.gov.uk/> Another good example is Vancouver's (Canada) Action Plan section of the website 'Green Vancouver' <https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/vancouver-climate-emergency.aspx>

<sup>18</sup> For ideas on the different co-benefits on climate action see Ashden's co-benefits toolkit; [https://ashden.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CAC-Chapters-all\\_new-brand.pdf](https://ashden.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CAC-Chapters-all_new-brand.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> The UK Government has a helpful guide to accessibility requirements for public bodies. They also provide training and webinars on increasing accessibility of websites and digital resources: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps>



- ❑ **A clear structure.** Plans should be easy to read and navigable. Plans should include: a table of contents, an executive summary, clear outlines of objectives, timelines for action and a table summary of actions.
- ❑ **A communication strategy.** The local authority should communicate, through all available channels:
  - o Why the Plan, and actions, are necessary.
  - o How to influence the Plan and how residents can access it once published and feedback on its contents.
  - o What impact actions will have on emissions.
  - o When actions will be implemented.
- ❑ **Integrate with existing local authority plans and strategies.** This is likely to include the Local Plan,<sup>20</sup> Corporate Plan, Biodiversity Plan, Air Quality Plan, Transport/Movement Strategy, Local Industrial Strategy etc.<sup>21</sup>
- ❑ **Arrangements for regular updates.** The Plan should provide updates on progress towards targets and any changes in national government support, resources, funding, technology or scientific knowledge.
- ❑ **Set out strategy for item ownership.** The Plan should set out who will take ownership of each action to ensure all targets are achieved.
- ❑ **Actions in the Plan are risk assessed.** Actions in the plan should consider
  - o Risks associated with climate change, such as flooding etc.
  - o Risks of implementation such as funding and human resources.

The BACILAT (Business Areas Climate Assessment Tool developed by UKCIP can be useful in developing a methodical approach to identifying threats and opportunities.<sup>22</sup>
- ❑ **The Council celebrates milestones.** Come together as a community to celebrate key milestones and achievements. This will keep up the momentum and demonstrate that actions are working!

### 1.3. Scope

Reaching net zero emissions will need more technological, funding and policy support from higher levels of government. The limitations of the Plan should be acknowledged, and how some of those limitations can be overcome. This section of the Plan should be under constant review. This will ensure that the local authority is taking advantage of Government initiatives available at the time.

Plans should:

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<sup>20</sup> The Town and Country Planning Association and Royal Town Planning Institute have a guide for local authorities for planning for climate change in their Local Plan:

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0acefe4f-9712-4b37-b2a1-06cd0f8b0293>

<sup>21</sup> Dundee is an example of a council that has included this in their climate action plan:

<https://www.dundee.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/climateactionplan.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> UCL's guide to Declaring a Climate Emergency pg. 70

[https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring\\_a\\_Climate\\_Emergency\\_76-end.pdf](https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring_a_Climate_Emergency_76-end.pdf)

- **Present a realistic view of what the local authority can and cannot do.** The Plan should be ambitious. However, it is important to recognise those places where ambition meets current realities.<sup>23</sup> The Plan should:
  - o State how limitations will be overcome, including where others need to act.
  - o Reference the responsibilities, resources and capabilities of the local authority.
- **Commit the authority to lobbying higher levels of government.** Where local authorities cannot act themselves, they can influence policy by lobbying higher levels of Government - including County (if a District Council), Combined Authorities, Devolved Administrations and UK, for changes in legislation, policy and funding.<sup>24</sup> They can also take part in public information campaigns. The Plan should state the actions the local authority will take to lobby the Government/s.
  - o Local authorities can lobby as part of a special interest group (such as the LGA), or in partnership with other organisations. An example of such a partnership is the Blueprint Coalition who have published a plan for accelerating climate action and a green recovery at the local level.<sup>25</sup> This sets out the national leadership, policies, powers and funding needed to empower local authorities to deliver at scale.
- **Acknowledge that climate change is a 'grand challenge.'**<sup>26</sup> There are no single or simple solutions to tackle the climate and ecological crisis. The Plan needs to recognise the multifaceted nature of this 'grand challenge.'
- **Ensure that no-one is left behind or disadvantaged unfairly.** The climate and ecological crisis is already worsening inequities and inequalities. Actions must ensure that no-one is left behind. For example, the Plan should lay out how those in carbon intensive industries can be supported into low carbon sectors.<sup>27</sup>

## 1.4. Costing the Plan

The climate emergency is likely to challenge or overwhelm response capacity, demanding the use of all available resources. Local authorities will have to develop institutional capacity and decision-making processes to evaluate costs and harness appropriate resources. Cost information is also an important way of measuring performance.<sup>28</sup> To find out more about costing read the UCL's Declaring a Climate Emergency Guide.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The London Borough of Islington has a good example of this: [Vision 2030](#):

<sup>24</sup> Plymouth is one council that has plans to put pressure upwards:

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/environmentandpollution/climatechangeandenergy/howweretacklingclimatechange>

<sup>25</sup> The Blueprint can be found here [Summary document: Blueprint for accelerating climate action and a green recovery at the local level](#)

<sup>26</sup> CAT's [Zero Carbon Britain: Rising to the Climate Emergency](#) report discusses the complexities of climate change as a wicked problem.

Cornwall Council has explored the challenge of addressing climate change as a wicked problem reframed as grand challenges (see Paragraph 10.2):

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/40176082/climate-change-action-plan.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Bristol's One City plan includes discussions in each delivery theme on engagement, culture and inclusion as well as : <https://www.bristolonecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/one-city-climate-strategy.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> UCL Declaring a Climate Emergency Guide Pg 62

[https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring\\_a\\_Climate\\_Emergency\\_76-end.pdf](https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring_a_Climate_Emergency_76-end.pdf)

<sup>29</sup>[https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring\\_a\\_Climate\\_Emergency\\_76-end.pdf](https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring_a_Climate_Emergency_76-end.pdf)

Plans should:

- **Implement costing mechanisms.** Plans should use costing mechanisms to set out the costs of the actions in the plan. Better use of costing will ensure policy decisions are well informed and realistic. It will also help to deliver services which are value for money.
- **Build partnerships with other councils when developing a costing strategy.** Working with other local authorities can help all parties to benefit from coordinated use of resources, and make value-for money comparisons.
- **Be transparent.** Information on costing and budgeting should be displayed clearly on the Climate Emergency section of the website.

## Section 2. Components of a Strong Action Plan



This section outlines the major components of a strong Climate Action Plan. It is divided into three main themes.

1. Reducing climate emissions.
2. Creating resilient, socially inclusive and healthy communities.
3. The need for strong commitment from the local authority to carry the Plan through to completion.



## 2.1. Emissions

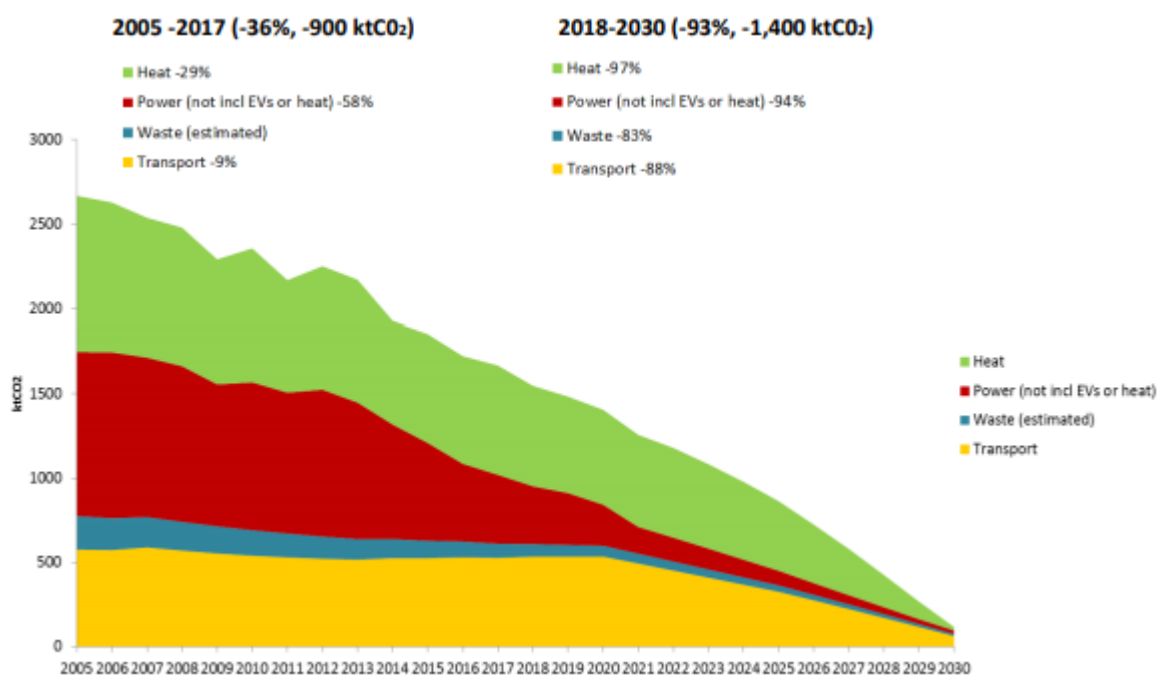
Reducing levels of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) is the main point of a Climate Emergency Action Plan. Reducing emissions is also known as climate mitigation. Climate adaptation is the process of becoming resilient to the current, and expected climate impacts.

### 2.1.1. Measuring and Setting Emission Targets

Setting emission targets, and measuring emission reductions, are the foundation of an Action Plan. It provides a baseline, sets a goal and allows the impact of actions to be monitored.

Plans should:

- **Include a Baseline Emission Inventory for Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** It is standard practice to measure emissions reductions using a baseline of 1990.<sup>30</sup> This provides the point that local authorities need to aim for in their emissions reductions.



Source: Bristol net zero by 2030: the evidence base<sup>31</sup>

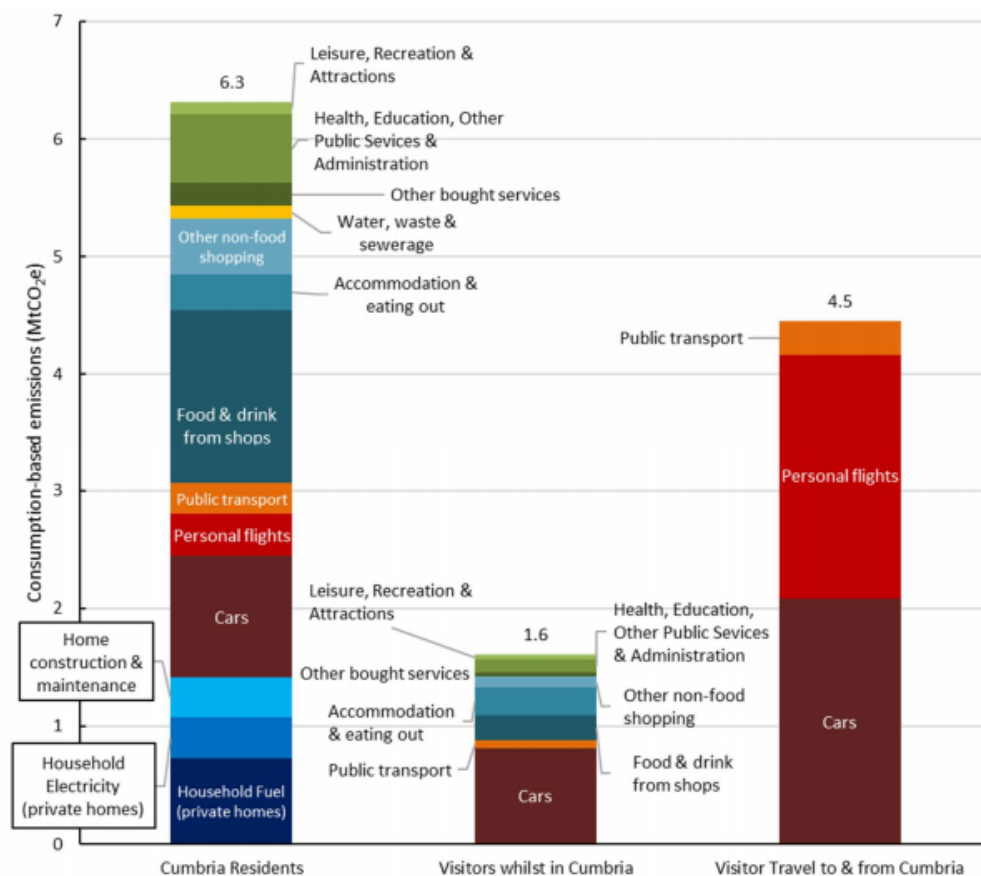
- **Quantify current GHG emissions for the area.** There are many data sets and tools available that local authorities can access when assessing their emissions. Some examples are BEIS and SCATTER<sup>32</sup> data and the Tyndall Carbon Budget Tool.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> See the Climate Change Act 2008: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.bristolonecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Bristol-net-zero-for-direct-emissions.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> 'SCATTER provides local authorities and city regions with the opportunity to standardise their greenhouse gas reporting and align to international frameworks, including the setting of targets in line with the Paris Climate Agreement': <https://scattercities.com/>

<sup>33</sup> The Tyndall Centre 'Carbon Budget Tool presents climate change targets for UK local authority areas that are based on the commitments in the United Nations Paris Agreement, informed by the latest science on climate change and defined by science based carbon budget setting': <https://carbonbudget.manchester.ac.uk/reports/>



Consumption-based Emissions baseline. Source: A Carbon Baseline for Cumbria<sup>34</sup>

- **Breakdown of Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.** The breakdown should quantify local authority emissions and emissions for the entire authority area. This shows which emissions the local authority is directly and indirectly responsible for, as well as emissions they have no control over but can encourage reductions in.<sup>35</sup> The Local Government Association (LGA) has a free tool to calculate Scope 1, 2 and basic Scope 3 emissions.<sup>36</sup>
- **Clearly state science-based GHG emissions reductions targets.** At the very least these targets should be in line with the Paris Agreement. 117 local authorities have set a target to reach net-zero emissions by 2030.<sup>37</sup> Many others have set ambitions for their area that are well before the UK Government Target of 2050. There are tools from BEIS, SCATTER, the Tyndall Centre and the LGA to help authorities set out how to deliver these targets.
- **Carefully define the terms.** This is not straightforward. 'Carbon neutral', 'climate neutral', 'net zero', 'zero emissions', 'zero carbon' and 'decarbonisation' have been used

<sup>34</sup> "Total consumption-based GHG emissions broken down by category and consumer"

<https://cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/536/671/4674/17217/17225/4414012219.PDF>

<sup>35</sup> Plymouth has created a corporate carbon reduction plan as well as a climate action plan. The first addresses their own emissions and the second is a city-wide strategy:

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/environmentandpollution/climatechangeandenergy/howweretacklingclimatechange>

<sup>36</sup> This tool from Local Partnerships working with the Local Government Association assists local authorities creating carbon baseline and benchmarking against other local authorities:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/greenhouse-gas-accounting-tool>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.pledge2030.uk/2021/02/25/full-list-of-countil-with-2030-target/>

interchangeably. Researchers at The University of Manchester and Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research have set out a consistent approach for policymakers to help avoid falling into the 'net zero' jargon trap.<sup>38</sup>

- **Highlight actions in key areas for emissions reductions.** The Plan should identify key areas for reducing emissions and also identify partners who can help with each action area. These partners can be particularly helpful in those areas outside of local authority control. Critical areas to reduce emissions include: energy, transport, heat, the built environment, consumption and waste, dietary choices, biodiversity/nature and land use. A local authority may not have direct influence in all these areas. However, there are many actions local authorities can take to support emission reductions.<sup>39</sup> For example, plant based school meals will reduce emissions from dietary choices. For an expanded list on key areas and specific actions see Section 3: Action Areas.
- **Focus on emissions reductions and not simply carbon offsetting.** Carbon offsetting should not be an excuse to continue high emission behaviours.<sup>40</sup> The Plan should seek to meet emissions targets through reducing emissions. It should not rely on large-scale offsetting or use of unproven or not-yet developed technology. Carbon removal activities, such as tree planting, can play a key role in reaching net-zero emissions. Many have co-benefits. For example, planting trees in built up areas also reduces the urban heat island effect.
- **Include a recognition of projected population and regional economic activity and the impact on emissions.** Plans should take into account future changes in emissions due to projected population and economic growth/shrinkage. Population growth will mean that emissions per person will have to reduce further to reach net-zero.
- **Commit to comparing progress globally.** Climate change requires global engagement. One way local authorities can achieve this is through the CDP platform.<sup>41</sup> The platform compares progress on reducing emissions from local authorities around the world.

### 2.1.2. Climate Impacts

The UK could see an average of 4+°C warming. This will lead to many more extreme weather events.<sup>42</sup> Sea level rise means the UK's coastal regions will need to make significant changes to continue living there.<sup>43</sup> Adapting to climate change also has the co-benefit of increasing the resilience of communities.

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<sup>38</sup> The University of Manchester and Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research discuss some of the common terms that should be carefully defined in your Action Plan: [http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/energy\\_environment/2019/04/setting-climate-targets-when-is-net-zero-really-net-zero/](http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/energy_environment/2019/04/setting-climate-targets-when-is-net-zero-really-net-zero/)

<sup>39</sup> <https://ashden.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/31-Climate-Actions-for-Councils.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> For a short discussion on offsetting and its efficacy see: <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-change/does-carbon-offsetting-work>

<sup>41</sup> The CDP platform allows local authorities to "measure, manage and disclose their environmental data" and also to compare their data to other global local authorities: <https://www.cdp.net/en/cities>

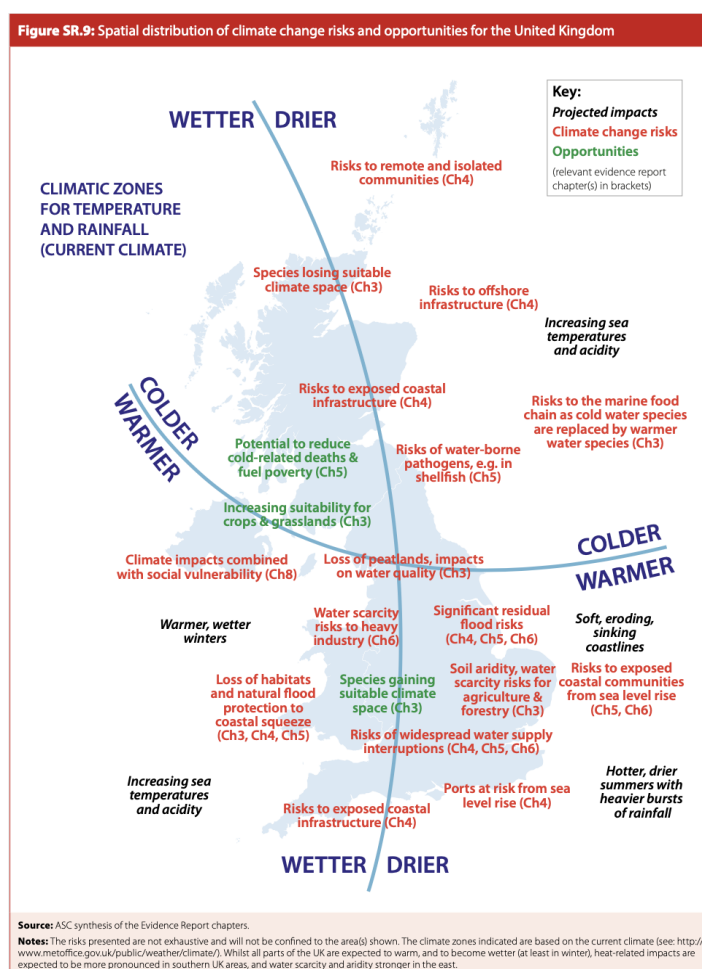
<sup>42</sup> See Met Office: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp-headline-findings-v2.pdf>

and <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/index>

<sup>43</sup> Climate Central has maps that can provide a starting point for understanding coastal changes with rising sea level: <https://sealevel.climatecentral.org/maps/>

Plans should include:

- **The implications of climate change for the local area.** Plans should include how the local authority will adapt to climate change. The changes each area sees will depend on its location. This may include: increasingly extreme local weather; sea level rise; coastal erosion; flooding; creation of heat islands; shortages of public water supply and problems with food production. The Plan should consider the impact of these on: residents (e.g. health, housing, education, employment); critical infrastructure; supply chains; the local natural environment; service delivery; the local economy; and pandemics/epidemics. It should also consider the impact of climate migration. Climate migration will increase as some areas of the UK, and the rest of the world, become less or even uninhabitable.



Source: Committee on Climate Change 2017<sup>44</sup>

- **Acknowledgement of planetary boundaries.** Plans can be structured around planetary boundaries, using the doughnut model.<sup>45</sup> The doughnut model provides a system

<sup>44</sup> Committee on Climate Change 2017 - page 49

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/UK-CCRA-2017-Synthesis-Report-Committee-on-Climate-Change.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Donut Economics proposes novel ways to create economically thriving, socially just and ecologically safe cities and communities around the planetary boundaries model:

<https://www.kateraworth.com/2020/07/16/so-you-want-to-create-a-city-doughnut/>



for decisions that ensures everyone is able to have life's essentials without overshooting Earth's systems. This can also help to identify areas that action should be focused on.

- **How to address the ecological emergency.** Earth Overshoot Day<sup>46</sup> marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year. The date gets earlier every year. Many local authorities have recognised the problem by also declaring an 'ecological', 'biodiversity', 'environmental' or 'nature' emergency. Plans should recognise the impact that climate change and human activities are having on biodiversity and nature and include actions to reverse this, for example through rewilding projects.

## 2.2. Resilient, Socially Inclusive and Healthy Communities

The effects of climate change do not and will not affect communities equally. Action Plans should leave no-one behind and support those most vulnerable in the community. Taking action to decarbonise has the co-benefit of increasing equity and social cohesion. These co-benefits include reducing fuel poverty, improving air quality, improving access to green spaces and creating jobs.<sup>47</sup>

### 2.2.1. Diversity & Social Inclusion

The Plan should:

- **Recognise who climate change will harm most.** The Plan should also include an equalities impact assessment. For example: older people are at most risk of extremes of heat and cold. People living in deprived areas have less access to green space and are more likely to experience the urban heat island effect. Tenants are less able to change their homes to adapt to climate change. BAME communities are disproportionately affected by air pollution.
- **Propose how to focus resources to support vulnerable communities.** The Plan should include actions across all areas that support the communities that are more vulnerable to climate impacts.<sup>48</sup> Areas to be addressed include: energy and fuel poverty; public health; food insecurity; improving job skills; clean air and reducing pollution; flood risk and recovery; educational risks and social risks; quality of public space and assets.
- **Addresses accessibility and connectivity to key services.** This should include, at a minimum: affordability of transport, transport connectivity, and accessibility to key services such as places of education and healthcare facilities.
- **Ensure under-represented groups will be included.** Those who are currently underrepresented in the environmental movement (e.g. Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities, those with disabilities, working class backgrounds, etc.) should be actively supported to be a part of the changing landscape.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.overshootday.org/>

<sup>47</sup> Ashden Co-benefits toolkit - page 65

[https://ashden.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CAC-Chapters-all\\_new-brand.pdf](https://ashden.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CAC-Chapters-all_new-brand.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> ClimateJust has a free tool for local authorities to "Identify who is vulnerable to climate change and fuel poverty and why; Highlight neighbourhoods where climate disadvantage is highest; and Explain the factors involved and help you decide what actions to take: <https://www.climatejust.org.uk/>

<sup>49</sup> Bristol acknowledges the need for supporting greater diversity in the environmental sector: <https://www.bristolonecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/one-city-climate-strategy.pdf>

- ❑ **Recognise the intergenerational inequity of climate change impacts.** Young people will be more affected by climate change. Therefore the Plan should seek to include youth at all stages. This will help ensure young people shape the world they will grow old in. It will also give young people the tools to be resilient in a less climate stable future.<sup>50</sup>
- ❑ **Include faith communities as allies in climate response.** Faith communities are already active in responding to the climate emergency including: building community resilience, placemaking, and supporting residents.<sup>51</sup> Faith communities can also be allies in reaching under-represented groups. One initiative is Cycle Sisters, a group of Muslim women who cycle together, which has been supported by Waltham Forest Council.<sup>52</sup>
- ❑ **Include the arts sector.** The arts sector can help with delivering climate action by engaging communities, creating the stories for how we want our cities to look,<sup>53</sup> and contributing to placemaking.<sup>54</sup>

## 2.2.2. Climate Resilience

The Plan should:

- ❑ **Help residents prepare for changes in climate and extreme weather.** The Plan should outline how the local authority will help their residents better prepare for extreme weather. For example: publishing a leaflet on how to prepare for emergencies; actively engaging with homeowners to increase flood protection for their homes; encouraging volunteers in emergency response groups; hosting information sessions on preparing for extreme weather, etc.
- ❑ **Ensure that language used portrays the urgency of the climate emergency.** Language used in the Plan and local authority messaging around the climate crisis should reflect the urgency of the situation. It is important that local authorities are honest about the risks to their communities.
- ❑ **Outline how the local authority will support programs that bring people together.** The local authority can increase community resilience by supporting programs that increase social cohesion, community engagement, and local self-sufficiency. Ideas that address climate action as well as community resilience include: repair workshops; community bicycle repair workshops; community fridges; community gardens; local food

<sup>50</sup> Birmingham is including youth on the taskforce for deciding on Birmingham's climate emergency response: [https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20015/environment/2026/climate\\_emergency/4](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20015/environment/2026/climate_emergency/4)

<sup>51</sup> Footsteps: Faiths for a Low Carbon Future and Birmingham Council of Faiths have created a report aimed at helping 'councillors, politicians, campaign groups, decision makers and civil society to engage more deeply and work more effectively with faith communities': <https://footstepsbcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BIRMINGHAM-CLIMATE-EMERGENCY-The-Role-for-Faith-Communities-Sept-2019.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> More information on Cycling Sisters can be found here [Inspiring cycling groups: Cycle Sisters](#)

<sup>53</sup> In Sweden, a group of cities have employed a Chief Storyteller to help write the future of a carbon neutral 2030 with residents:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-11/meet-sweden-s-chief-storyteller-for-climate-change>

<sup>54</sup> This project from Adaptation Scotland, Creative Carbon Scotland, Aberdeen City Council, Robert Gordon University and four creative practitioners is a case study for how the arts can help people explore and discuss climate change:

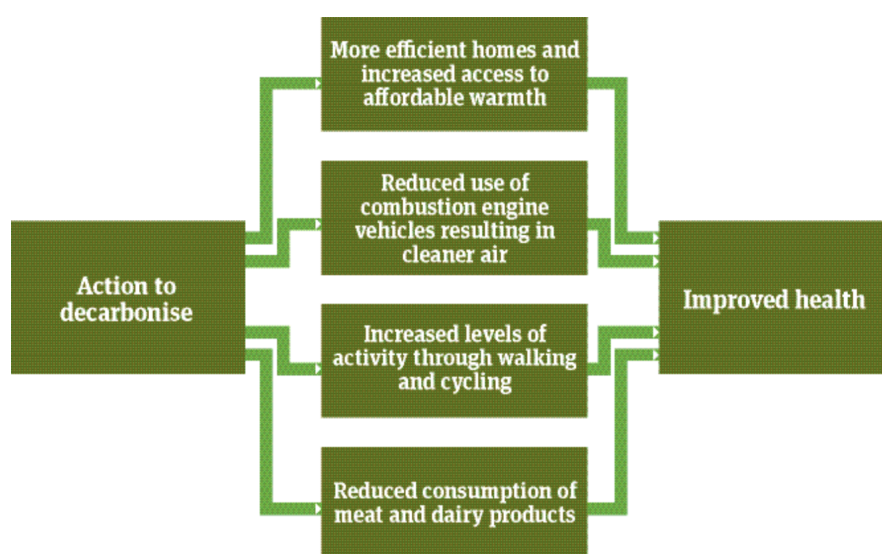
<https://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/how-adapt/case-studies/engaging-community-adaptation-through-cultural-practice>

hubs; tool sharing clubs; kitchens for people to cook food and take it home; energy advice cafes and bicycle giveaway schemes.<sup>55</sup>

### 2.2.3. Public Health

Plans should include:

- **Public health as a key component across the different action themes.** Local authorities should consider the impacts to public health as the climate changes. Impacts to consider range from disruptions in supply chains to preparing residents for heat waves. Plans can also consider the long term health impacts should food insecurity increase.
- **What a green recovery looks like post Covid-19.** Post Covid-19 there is the opportunity to rebuild our communities with sustainability and climate action at the core.<sup>56</sup> Local government organisations have formed a coalition with NGOs to draw up a 'Blueprint for accelerating climate action and a green recovery at local level.'<sup>57</sup>
- **A strategy for addressing epidemics and pandemics as part of wider climate actions.** The current Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the ways in which ecological collapse can impact human populations and economies. The Action Plan should consider how preparing for further epidemics and pandemics can be combined with climate action.



Source: Ashden Climate Action Co-benefits Toolkit

- **The public health co-benefits.** Public health and the climate crisis are intrinsically connected. Public Health England estimates in 2019 that up to 36,000 people die each year

<sup>55</sup> For an example of bike loans and social cycling see Big Birmingham Bikes (The Active Wellbeing Society): <https://theaws.co.uk/activities/big-birmingham-bikes/>

<sup>56</sup> Ashden outlines some of the key elements here after a discussion with city region officers from England's nine metro mayor city regions they hosted with the LGA: <https://ashden.org/news/delivering-a-green-recovery-in-our-city-regions/>

<sup>57</sup> ADEPT and a coalition of local government, environmental, and research organisations have published a blueprint for a locally-based blue and green recovery: <https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/news/covid-19-recovery-must-address-climate-change-%E2%80%93-report-calls-government-invest-indispensable>

in the UK as a result of air pollution.<sup>58</sup> The Plan should make links with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, identifying how climate action can deliver public health objectives such as reducing childhood obesity or respiratory disease.



Source: Greater Manchester Beelines Strategy

## 2.2.4. Education, Skills and Training

Plans should:

- ❑ **Include training for staff and councillors.** Local authorities must make sure that all staff and councillors understand the causes of climate change, potential actions for mitigation and adaptation and the role that the council can play. There are free carbon literacy training materials that are available for local authorities.<sup>59</sup>
- ❑ **Include education as a key component across the different action themes.** Local authorities should include education and outreach to help local communities come to terms with the climate crisis and actions needed to address it.<sup>60</sup> There should be a particular emphasis on young people, who will be most impacted by the climate crisis. Friends of the Earth have a Report on the need for green apprenticeships<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-england-publishes-air-pollution-evidence-review>

<sup>59</sup> The Carbon Literacy project has free climate literacy toolkits for local authorities: <https://carbonliteracy.com/toolkits/local-authorities/>

<sup>60</sup> Vancouver (CA) created dialogue kits to help residents talk to each other on proposed actions and gain feedback. [Climate Emergency Response | Host a dialogue](#)

<sup>61</sup> <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate/quarter-million-green-apprenticeships-needed-fix-youth-unemployment-crisis>



- **Include support for schools.** The Plan should help schools to reduce their own emissions.<sup>62</sup> Schools should also be encouraged to help pupils learn about climate change in and out of the classroom. Initiatives could include running 'Eco' or 'Green' clubs<sup>63</sup> and planting trees/fruit orchards/hedgerows on their school fields.<sup>64</sup> The Plan may also include actions to lobby the UK government to include the climate emergency across the school curriculum.<sup>65</sup>
- **Identify the skills and capacity needed to transform the local economy at the scale and pace needed.** The Plan should include how and when these skills will be met. Education providers and careers services also need to be upskilled in identifying future employment trends and opportunities.<sup>66</sup>

## 2.3. Local Authority Commitment

There is no legal obligation on local authorities to declare a Climate Emergency or deliver an ambitious Action Plan. This can reduce the ambition and quality of Action Plans.<sup>67</sup> So, sustained political will and leadership is needed. A local authority must gain cross party support and commit to a change in organisational culture, prioritising climate mitigation and adaptation measures across all the authority's activities.

### 2.3.1. Political Commitment

The Action Plan should:

- **Have strong political commitment across all parties.** It is vital that delivery of the Action Plan is not weakened as council makeup changes or national government shifts. There should be cross-party commitment to sustained, ongoing support for climate action. The Plan should include a strong cross-party statement of intent at the beginning. This statement should include a pledge to do what is possible with current resources and powers and to campaign for more when these are lacking.
- **Include the wording of the original motion that was passed.** For transparency it is important to include the wording of the climate/ecological emergency declaration and include a reference to the minutes where it can be found in context.

### 2.3.2. Local Authorities Leading by Example

The Action Plan should:

- **Commit the local authority to include the climate emergency in all local authority decisions and actions.** The Plan should clearly explain how it integrates across council functions. It should also commit the Council to view all future decisions

<sup>62</sup> Schools can sign up to the Let's Go Zero campaign: <https://letsgozero.org/> or register as an Eco-school: <https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/>

<sup>63</sup> Activities from a Primary School Eco-club <https://www.wigmore.luton.sch.uk/curriculum/clubs/eco-club>

<sup>64</sup> <https://treecouncil.org.uk/schools-and-education/orchards-for-schools/>

<sup>65</sup> More information on the national campaign can be found here: <https://www.teachthefuture.uk>

<sup>66</sup> Hull has a strong focus on education and skills, green jobs, and fair transition in their action plan: <http://www.hull.gov.uk/sites/hull/files/media/Hull%202030%20Carbon%20Neutral%20Strategy.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> See this manual for a discussion on challenges: [https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring\\_a\\_Climate\\_Emergency\\_76-end.pdf](https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring_a_Climate_Emergency_76-end.pdf)

through a 'climate emergency lens'.<sup>68</sup> This could include introducing a section on climate action and implications to all Council and committee reports.<sup>69</sup> This would ensure the climate emergency forms an integral part of all decision making.

- **Set out how the climate emergency will be integrated with existing organisational policies, procedures and investments.** Areas that should be included, as a minimum, are:
  - Finance (procurement, Capex, supply chain requirements, etc.). For example, divestment of pensions and investments and investment of pensions in renewable energies.<sup>70</sup>
  - HR (individual objectives, recruitment, competencies, accountability, etc.). For example, placing climate mitigation and adaptation into all job descriptions and providing climate focused training<sup>71</sup> and resources.
  - Parks (equipment and procedures). For example, stopping the use of pesticides, purchasing electric park equipment and mowing less.
  - Planning (policies and procedures). For example, creating walkable communities and requiring higher efficiency standards for new build houses.
- **Impact all strategies, policies, services and investments.** Plans should make clear that reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity must be a key aim of all strategies and investments. This includes: the local authority corporate plan, COVID-19 recovery plans, and local industrial strategies.
- **Include how the local authority and its leaders will work to influence other bodies.** The Plan should set out how the local authority will influence a wide range of other organisations (e.g. Local Enterprise Partnerships, Combined Authorities, Sub-national Transport bodies, etc.) to reduce their own emissions and increase biodiversity.<sup>72</sup>
- **A plan to support the bodies Local Authorities have responsibility over.** Councils must support the bodies they have responsibility over. For a district council this could be in the form of climate emergency packs for parish councils in their area.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Oxford has introduced a climate emergency lens.

[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1275/city\\_council\\_responds\\_to\\_oxford\\_citizens\\_assembly\\_on\\_climate\\_change\\_and\\_outlines\\_19m\\_climate\\_emergency\\_budget](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1275/city_council_responds_to_oxford_citizens_assembly_on_climate_change_and_outlines_19m_climate_emergency_budget)

<sup>69</sup><https://localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/environment/767-environmental-features/42461-climate-emergency-1-have-you-thought-about-governance-2>

<sup>70</sup> 2021 analysis by Friends of the Earth and Platform found that local authorities are investing around £10 billion in fossil fuels. <https://www.divest.org.uk/councils>

Examples of LA's to divest are Islington, Lambeth and Southwark. Southwark then invested £65 million in renewable energy funds. *Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget*, pg. 32.

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/local-authorities-and-the-sixth-carbon-budget/>

<sup>71</sup> Hull's 2030 Carbon Neutral Strategy includes staff training for council employees:

<http://www.hull.gov.uk/environment/pollution/hull-2030-carbon-neutral-strategy>. Hull has also worked with Investors in the Environment towards reaching carbon goals

<https://www.iie.uk.com/green-directory/hull-city-council/>

<sup>72</sup> CACE (Council Action in the Climate Emergency) has a helpful graphic for visualizing council influence:

<https://www.caceonline.org/>

<sup>73</sup> Centre for Alternative Technology, *Zero Carbon Britain*, pg. 147.

<https://www.cat.org.uk/info-resources/zero-carbon-britain/research-reports/zero-carbon-britain-rising-to-the-climate-emergency/>

- **Commitment to collaborate with neighbouring and cross-tier local authorities on net-zero strategies and plans.**<sup>74</sup> Working with other Councils will ensure net-zero plans are coherent. Areas for collaboration could include transportation, energy, housing, infrastructure and skills. Sharing best practice between Councils ensures that action spreads beyond borough borders and avoids reinventing the wheel.

## 2.4. Delivering the Action Plan

To be effective, the Plan needs to include provision for how it will be funded and monitored. The Plan should also have a clear timeline and assign who will be responsible for the delivery of actions.

### 2.4.1. Governance & Partnerships

The Action Plan should:

- **Identify the key bodies needed to deliver actions.** The local authority will not be able to implement a comprehensive plan on its own. For each action, the Plan should identify who is responsible for delivering it. This may be the local authority, the local authority in partnership or other organisations/groups. This could include: local residents; local statutory organisations; VCSE/third sector; anchor institutions; local businesses; NGOs; other councils in the area; Distribution Network Operators (DNOs); Utility companies; the National Government; Arts organisations; Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs); community organisations.<sup>75</sup> The Plan should set out how the local authority will work with these partners (e.g. through a climate action commission or partnership) and how partners can help steer the delivery of the plan.
- **Set out how the Council will be accountable for delivering the Plan.** The Plan should identify which body and/or process is responsible for scrutiny, accountability, oversight, review, and developing best practice. It should also identify who is responsible for: annual/bi-annual reporting on progress; strategic level review; action level review and regularly updating the plan. One approach is to create an independent oversight body formed of a cross section of the local population and sectors. If you are scrutinising climate action the Local Government Association has published 10 Questions to ask.<sup>76</sup>

### 2.4.2. Funding

Actions that reduce emissions involve upfront financial costs. But many actions have measurable financial co-benefits, long term economic benefits or can be paid back in a variety of ways, such as through energy savings.

The Action Plan should:

- **Identify funding for actions.** The Plan should identify if funding exists for an action/measure or where it will be sought.<sup>77</sup> This could include sources such as: capital

<sup>74</sup> *Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget*, pg. 13.

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/local-authorities-and-the-sixth-carbon-budget/>

<sup>75</sup> The Cool Wirral Partnership has set out a mechanism for working in partnership. It's independent of the council but supported by them. It has a list that explains how the partnership works and commitments of the partners: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/climate-change-and-sustainability/cool-wirral-partnership>

<sup>76</sup> <https://local.gov.uk/centre-public-scrutiny-10-questions-scrutinise-climate-action>

<sup>77</sup> UK100 has a report on financing local energy initiatives with some excellent UK Local Authority Examples: <https://www.uk100.org/campaigns/financing-local-energy>

spend; revenue spend; grants; SALIX funds<sup>78</sup> or other public sector borrowing; Community Municipal Bonds<sup>79</sup>; part of regular maintenance/upgrades; council tax increases; payback from implementing the measure over x number of years; polluter pays schemes.

- **Set out the financial return on investment.** Some projects, such as renewable energy, will provide a return on investment. A business case can be made, including if the initial outlay can be recouped through cost reductions or new revenue streams. Economies of scale can improve the financial return, through collaboration with neighbouring local authorities, other anchor institutions or community organisations (e.g. community energy groups).
- **Other returns on investment.** A cost benefit analysis should include the co-benefits of climate action. This could include health, wellbeing, ecosystem and economic benefits. According to Public Health England: “Investment in walking and cycling infrastructure or behaviour change programmes can be expected to deliver low cost, high-value dividends for individual health, the NHS, the transport system and the economy as a whole.”<sup>80</sup>
- **Identify actions that will no longer be supported.** The council should identify any high emitting activity it currently supports and commit to stop funding them.
- **Focus on action where extra investment is not needed.** Not all actions need new investment. For example, “updating performance requirements in contracts for public transport, waste management and other services needn’t come at significant additional cost.”<sup>81</sup>
- **Include actions where the UK Government can support the local authority.** The Plan should focus on funding schemes that are already in place. But it could include, although not rely on, actions that need changes in UK Government policy or large amounts of funding to achieve them. If the Plan identifies places where Government funding is needed, but not available, it should include a commitment to lobby the Government.
- **Include actions where respective devolved Governments can support the local authority.** As above, but taking account of the different funding structures available to councils in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### 2.4.3. Timelines and Momentum

Recommendations:

- **Set target dates for actions.** The Plan should clearly lay out timelines and target completion dates for actions the local authority is responsible for, as well as their desired targets for actions taken by partners and residents. This should include ongoing as well as

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<sup>78</sup> Salix Finance Ltd. provides Government funding to the public sector to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emission and lower energy bills <https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/>

<sup>79</sup> Abundance investment help local authorities finance infrastructure projects through crowdfunding <https://issuers.abundanceinvestment.com/local-authorities>

<sup>80</sup> Public Health England report on working together to promote active travel [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/523460/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Promote\\_Active\\_Travel\\_A\\_briefing\\_for\\_local\\_authorities.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523460/Working_Together_to_Promote_Active_Travel_A_briefing_for_local_authorities.pdf)

<sup>81</sup> Arup have put together a guide of next steps following local authorities’ declarations of a climate emergency <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/ARUP-Climate-Emergency-What-Next.pdf>



short, medium, and long-term goals. See BANES (short term), Wandsworth and Exeter (long term) for examples.<sup>82</sup>

- ❑ **Keep the public informed about meeting/missing targets.** As mentioned in Section 1.2, the local authority should have an easy to find section on their website for their climate action plan. This could be a dashboard that demonstrates progress on meeting/missing targets and commitments. The local authority should also consider other appropriate ways of communicating and demonstrating progress to the local community.
- ❑ **Recognise the implications of not meeting emissions goals.** The Plan should set out the consequences of not reducing emissions quickly enough, with a focus on impacts for the local area.
- ❑ **Set out how the local authority aims to maintain momentum and continued support for the Plan.** The Action Plan should lay out strategies to keep momentum and support for the plan, including action that can be taken quickly, providing emission analysis with every Council decision and a strong collaborative approach across the Council.

## 2.4.4. Monitoring

It is essential to monitor the progress of the Action Plan in order to assess its effectiveness and reevaluate when necessary.

Action Plans should:

- ❑ **Put into place a monitoring system for the revision and evaluation of targets.** Plans could, for example, assign each action to an officer to be in charge of monitoring its progress. UCL recommends that local governments cover at least one of the following components to monitor their adaptation and mitigation actions:<sup>83</sup>
  - ❑ For adaptation:
    - ❑ Tracking progress of implementation, including sharing lessons
    - ❑ Adaptation goals and targets
    - ❑ Assess the adaptive capacity of local communities
  - ❑ For mitigation:
    - ❑ Greenhouse gas emissions and trends
    - ❑ Mitigation goals and trends
    - ❑ Policy measures
    - ❑ Projections

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<sup>82</sup> BANES

<https://data.climateemergency.uk/media/data/plans/bath-and-north-east-somerset-council-f749e7b.pdf>;

Wandsworth

<https://data.climateemergency.uk/media/data/plans/london-borough-of-wandsworth-93ad29c.pdf>; Exeter

<https://data.climateemergency.uk/media/data/plans/exeter-city-council-101625a.pdf> pg.57-63

<sup>83</sup> UCL Declaring a Climate Emergency Guide, page 67.

[https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring\\_a\\_Climate\\_Emergency\\_76-end.pdf](https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring_a_Climate_Emergency_76-end.pdf)

## Section 3. Action Areas



The following list of actions is not comprehensive but gives an indication of some of the key action areas that should be included in local climate action plans. Of course, the specific actions that a Council can take will depend on the type of council and the powers and responsibilities that it has.<sup>84</sup> Some examples of good practice are included. However, we would like to add to these. If you know of actions that should be included here please get in touch: [checklist@climateemergency.uk](mailto:checklist@climateemergency.uk)

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<sup>84</sup> Local authorities come in many shapes and sizes that not only depend on region but also country in the UK. For a quick guide to local authorities for those engaging with their council as an activist or resident see: [Understanding how your council works | Climate Action \(takeclimateaction.uk\)](https://www.takeclimateaction.uk/)

## Planning & Land Use

Local authorities' planning functions are a key lever in reducing emissions and adapting localities to a changing climate. Planning for the climate & ecological emergencies leads to walkable communities, greener buildings and fossil free communities. It is a Council's greatest power to reduce emissions. [Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from councils across the UK.

## Transport

Transport accounts for 34% of UK emissions, making it the largest source of emissions in the UK.<sup>85</sup> It is vital to reduce emissions from transport, particularly travel by car, by encouraging active travel, improving public transport facilities and investing in electric vehicle charging points. The Action Plan should consider council, business, non-profit, and personal travel. It is useful to set out an overall ambition, for example, the Cool Wirral strategy has an objective for Clean Travel which is "A complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030". [Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from councils across the UK.

## Buildings and Housing

Energy used in domestic, council, industrial and commercial buildings makes up a large part of an area's carbon emissions. It is essential that buildings are energy efficient and powered by renewable energy sources wherever possible. [Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from councils across the UK.

## Commercial & Industrial

Data from BEIS shows that emissions from business and industry make up 20% of the annual carbon emissions for the UK.<sup>86</sup> Local authorities have an important role in supporting the shift to a low carbon economy, including taking action in areas such as renewable energy, energy efficiency and supply chains within commercial and industrial sectors. [Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from councils across the UK.

## Energy Generation and Heating

It must be acknowledged that councils will be dependent on national action to decarbonise electricity e.g. expansion of offshore wind.<sup>87</sup> However, within their areas they should also play a role

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<sup>85</sup> 2019 UK greenhouse gas emissions, provisional figures  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/875485/2019\\_UK\\_greenhouse\\_gas\\_emissions\\_provisional\\_figures\\_statistical\\_release.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875485/2019_UK_greenhouse_gas_emissions_provisional_figures_statistical_release.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> UK Gov. 2018 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Figure - pages 18 and 21  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/862887/2018\\_Final\\_greenhouse\\_gas\\_emissions\\_statistical\\_release.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/862887/2018_Final_greenhouse_gas_emissions_statistical_release.pdf)

<sup>87</sup> The Centre for Alternative Technology has a range of resources available on building net zero energy networks: <https://www.cat.org.uk/info-resources/zero-carbon-britain/>

in renewable generation - solar and space for onshore wind.<sup>88</sup> Heating accounts for large shares of energy use, half of all energy consumed in Scotland, therefore work to decarbonise energy and heat networks is critical.<sup>89</sup> [Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from Councils across the UK.

## **Natural environment and biodiversity**

While the primary focus of this checklist is on the climate, there is also an ecological crisis, therefore, restoring nature and increasing blue and green infrastructure should be integral to addressing the climate crisis. Healthy ecosystems will provide adaptation services such as flood water storage and increase carbon sequestration as well as delivering improvements in our health and wellbeing from having access to nature rich green spaces. [Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from Councils across the UK.

## **Agriculture and Food**

Some councils have county farms, for example, Cornwall County Council aims to “make our Council Farms exemplars in low carbon and regenerative agriculture”. Influence on most farmland is more limited and government policy will be crucial. However, local authorities can support local agriculture and food production, encourage new allotments, and more. [Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from Councils across the UK.

## **Waste**

Depending on the type of council, local authorities may have control over recycling, non-recyclable waste and food waste in both domestic and non-domestic settings. Plans should include actions to reduce waste in all areas under its jurisdiction, and move towards a circular economy whilst adopting a refuse, reduce, reuse, repair, recycle approach to waste.

[Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from Councils across the UK.

## **Carbon sequestration and carbon capture**

Councils should aim to reduce their emissions as much as possible and not rely on carbon sequestration, however, it will be necessary in reaching net-zero by 2030. [Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from Councils across the UK.

## **Education & Youth**

Today’s young people are among those who will be most impacted by climate change, as they will be forced to live with climate breakdown in the decades to come. They are also the leaders of tomorrow and must be prepared for the challenges they will have to face. [Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from Councils across the UK.

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<sup>88</sup> In Scotland, the Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme supports local authorities in building renewable networks:  
<https://www.gov.scot/policies/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy/low-carbon-infrastructure-transition-programme/>

<sup>89</sup> Dundee addresses decarbonizing their heat networks:  
<https://www.dundee.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/climateactionplan.pdf>



## Public health

Improvements in public health will be delivered as co-benefits of many of the actions listed above including more active travel and more green space. It is vital that the Plan includes public health as a key component across its different action themes.<sup>90</sup> [Check out our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from Councils across the UK.

## Community Resources and Place making

The local authority can provide resources for the community to help people upgrade their homes effectively and economically. It can also create and support places that people can increase their climate resiliency, learn new skills and also promote a lower carbon sharing economy. [Read our document](#) to find out more actions and good practice from Councils across the UK.



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<sup>90</sup> Dundee's plan has a focus on public health and many of their actions include ways to increase public health as part of addressing the climate emergency:  
<https://www.dundee.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/climateactionplan.pdf>



## Section 4. Resources

### Accessibility

- ❑ **The UK Government** has a helpful guide to accessibility requirements for public bodies. They also provide training and webinars on increasing accessibility of websites and digital resources:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps>

### Active wellbeing

- ❑ **Active wellbeing society** :<https://theaws.co.uk/>
- ❑ **We are Cycling UK** supports cycling groups, advocacy, bike repair and more:  
<https://www.cyclinguk.org/>
- ❑ **Public Health England** report on working together to promote active travel  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/523460/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Promote\\_Active\\_Travel\\_A\\_briefing\\_for\\_local\\_authorities.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523460/Working_Together_to_Promote_Active_Travel_A_briefing_for_local_authorities.pdf)

### Biodiversity

- ❑ **Pesticide Action Network UK** has information on local authorities becoming pesticide free  
<https://www.pan-uk.org/pesticide-free/>
- ❑ Information on biodiverse roofs  
[https://www.susdrain.org/case-studies/case\\_studies/ruislip\\_green\\_roof\\_retrofit\\_tube\\_depot\\_london.html](https://www.susdrain.org/case-studies/case_studies/ruislip_green_roof_retrofit_tube_depot_london.html) and <https://www.utrecht.nl/city-of-utrecht/bus-stops-with-green-roofs/>
- ❑ Information on rewilding streets at <https://www.rewildmystreet.org/>

### Blue and Green Recovery

- ❑ **ADEPT** has published a blueprint for a locally-based blue and green recovery:  
<https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/news-events/climate-change-hub/show-your-support-five-immediate-priorities-green-recovery>
- ❑ **Ashden** outlines some key elements of a green recovery here  
<https://ashden.org/news/delivering-a-green-recovery-in-our-city-regions/>

### Buildings

- ❑ Zero carbon buildings design: <https://www.leti.london/cedg>
- ❑ Retrofit:  
<https://www.ukgbc.org/ukgbc-work/driving-retrofit-of-existing-homes/>  
<https://www.ukgbc.org/news/new-interactive-map-shows-local-authorities-leading-the-way-on-home-retrofit/>

### Climate Change Committee

- ❑ 6th carbon budget report on local government:  
<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/local-authorities-and-the-sixth-carbon-budget/>

### Climate Impacts

- ❑ **Climate Central** has maps that can provide a starting point for understanding coastal changes with rising sea level: <https://sealevel.climatecentral.org/maps/>

## Climate Justice

- ❑ **ClimateJust** has a free tool for local authorities to “Identify who is vulnerable to climate change and fuel poverty and why; Highlight neighbourhoods where climate disadvantage is highest; and Explain the factors involved and help you decide what actions to take:  
<https://www.climatejust.org.uk/>

## Co-benefits

- ❑ **Ashden’s co-benefit toolkit** for local authorities:  
[https://ashden.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CAC-Chapters-all\\_new-brand.pdf](https://ashden.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CAC-Chapters-all_new-brand.pdf)

## Community Engagement

- ❑ **Ashden** has a co-benefits toolkit with an entire chapter dedicated to creative ideas for council engagement with their communities:  
<https://ashden.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CAC-TOOLKIT-CHAPTER-6.pdf>.
- ❑ See a snapshot of ideas from Ashden for citizen engagement here:  
<https://ashden.org/news/how-can-councils-engage-citizens-in-climate-action/>
- ❑ **Engagement HQ** provides a “complete suite of listening, information, analysis, reporting and relationship management features enable you to mix and match precisely the right online tools for your community engagement objectives.”  
<https://www.bangthetable.com/engagementhq-community-software>
- ❑ **Shared Futures** helps councils lead citizen juries and assemblies as well as providing a range of other resident engagement support: <https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/> They also have a guide for local authorities and other bodies on climate assemblies and juries:  
<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Shared-Future-PCAN-Climate-Assemblies-and-Juries-web.pdf>.
- ❑ **MySociety** has a helpful guide to digital tools for citizen assemblies  
<https://research.mysociety.org/publications/digital-tools-citizens-assemblies> as well as a practical guide for good practice for citizen assembly websites including design, evaluation of data, and archiving: <https://research.mysociety.org/publications/citizens-assembly-websites>.
- ❑ **The Innovation in Democracy Programme (liDP)** has produced a handbook for local authorities on how to run citizen assemblies and also provides case studies of deliberative democracy in action:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/innovation-in-democracy-programme-launch>
- ❑ **Climate Assembly UK’s** report on what a cross section of the UK public thinks the National Government should be doing to reach carbon targets can be read here:  
<https://www.climateassembly.uk/index.html>. It is a helpful launch point to begin thinking about different areas of concern and pros and cons for different actions.
- ❑ **Footsteps: Faiths for a Low Carbon Future** and **Birmingham Council of Faiths** have created a report aimed at helping ‘councillors, politicians, campaign groups, decision makers and civil society to engage more deeply and work more effectively with faith communities’:  
<https://footstepsbcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BIRMINGHAM-CLIMATE-EMERGE-NCY-The-Role-for-Faith-Communities-Sept-2019.pdf>

## Councils that have declared a climate emergency and their action plans

- ❑ **Climate Emergency UK** has a database of the Councils who have declared a climate emergency, the dates they have set for net zero emissions targets and their action plans.  
<https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/list-of-councils/>  
<https://data.climateemergency.uk/>

## Emissions

- ❑ **National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory** (NAEI) produces GHG and energy datasets for local and regional areas. They also have CO2 interactive maps with emissions data by sector within each Local Authority. <https://naei.beis.gov.uk/data/local-authority>
- ❑ **The Carbon Trust** offers services that help organisations understand and reduce their emissions: <https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/briefing-what-are-scope-3-emissions>
- ❑ **SCATTER** provides local authorities and city regions with the opportunity to standardise their greenhouse gas reporting and align to international frameworks, including the setting of targets in line with the Paris Climate Agreement': <https://scattercities.com/>
- ❑ The Tyndall Centre 'Carbon Budget Tool presents climate change targets for UK local authority areas that are based on the commitments in the United Nations Paris Agreement, informed by the latest science on climate change and defined by science based carbon budget setting': <https://carbonbudget.manchester.ac.uk/reports/>
- ❑ This tool from Local Partnerships working with the Local Government Association assists local authorities creating carbon baseline and benchmarking against other local authorities: <https://www.local.gov.uk/greenhouse-gas-accounting-tool>
- ❑ **Greenhouse Gas Protocol for Cities: Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories** produces an accounting and reporting standard and methodology for community-scale emission inventories for cities to follow.
- ❑ **The Nature Friendly Farming Network** has a guide for farmers on ways to achieve net zero: <https://www.nffn.org.uk/net-zero-a-practical-guide/>

## Energy

- ❑ **The Centre for Alternative Technology** provides tools, training and research to reach a Zero Carbon Britain: <https://www.cat.org.uk/> and <https://www.cat.org.uk/info-resources/zero-carbon-britain/>
- ❑ The National Grid has put together a report on environmental electricity transmission <https://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/electricity-transmission/document/134511/download>

## Funding

- ❑ **UK100** has a report on financing local energy initiatives with some excellent UK Local Authority Examples: <https://www.uk100.org/campaigns/financing-local-energy>
- ❑ **Salix Finance Ltd.** provides Government funding to the public sector to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and lower energy bills. <https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/>
- ❑ **Abundance investment** help local authorities finance infrastructure projects through crowdfunding <https://issuers.abundanceinvestment.com/local-authorities>

## Ideas for climate emergency action plans

- ❑ **FOE** 50-point plan to tackle the climate and nature emergencies and corona virus recovery: <https://takeclimateaction.uk/sites/files/climate/documents/2020-06/Climate%20Action%20Plan%20for%20councils%20June%202020.pdf>
- ❑ **Ashden** 31 Climate Actions for Councils: <https://ashden.org/climate-action-co-benefits-toolkit/>
- ❑ **The Town and Country Planning Association and Royal Town Planning Institute** have a guide for local authorities for planning for climate change in their Local Plan: <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0acefe4f-9712-4b37-b2a1-06cd0f8b0293>
- ❑ **UCL and Arup** have put together a manual on what makes a good action plan including some of the main challenges

[https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring\\_a\\_Climate\\_Emergency\\_76-end.pdf](https://climateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Declaring_a_Climate_Emergency_76-end.pdf)

- ❑ **Arup's** guide to next steps after declaring a climate emergency  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/ARUP-Climate-Emergency-What-Next.pdf>

### **National and International Comparisons**

- ❑ **The CDP platform** allows local authorities to “measure, manage and disclose their environmental data” and also to compare their data to other global local authorities:  
<https://www.cdp.net/en/cities>
- ❑ **CASE** tracks local authority climate emergency declarations. It is a good resource to see which local authorities are taking action:  
<https://www.caceonline.org/councils-that-have-declared.html>

### **Partnerships**

- ❑ **Place-Based Climate Action Network** has supported a range of local authorities in launching climate commission partnerships in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland:  
<https://pcancities.org.uk/climate-commissions>
- ❑ **The Cool Wirral Partnership** has set out a mechanism for working in partnerships. It has a list of bullets for how the partnership works and commitments of the partners:  
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/climate-change-and-sustainability/cool-wirral-partnership>

### **Resources around food and agriculture**

- ❑ **Sustain: The Alliance for better Food and Farming** runs campaigns to improve food and farming in the UK: <https://www.sustainweb.org/>
- ❑ **Roots to Work** for sustainable food jobs: <https://www.rootstowork.org/>

### **Resources for identifying and supporting action needed from National Government**

- ❑ **FOE** guide to how the government can help English councils act on the climate emergency  
<https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/how-can-government-help-english-councils-act-on-climate-breakdown>
- ❑ **ADEPT** blue print for accelerating climate action and green recovery at local level  
<https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/documents/blueprint-accelerating-climate-action-and-green-recovery-local-level>

### **Resources for Northern Ireland**

- ❑ **FOE** Climate Action Plan for Northern Ireland Councils:  
[https://takeclimateaction.uk/sites/files/climate/documents/2020-10/October\\_2020\\_Climate\\_Action\\_Plan\\_Northern\\_Ireland.pdf](https://takeclimateaction.uk/sites/files/climate/documents/2020-10/October_2020_Climate_Action_Plan_Northern_Ireland.pdf)

### **Resources for residents and community action**

- ❑ **Energy Saving Trust** <http://energysavingtrust.org.uk/>
- ❑ **The Transition Network** <https://transitionnetwork.org/>
- ❑ **FOE** guide to help activists and residents understand their local authorities [Understanding how your council works](https://takeclimateaction.uk/understanding-how-your-council-works) | [Climate Action \(takeclimateaction.uk\)](https://takeclimateaction.uk)

### **Resources for Scotland**

- ❑ The **Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme** supports local authorities in building renewable networks:

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy/low-carbon-infrastructure-transition-programme/>

- ❑ **Adaptation Scotland** is funded by the Scottish Government and aims to help communities, organisations and businesses adapt to climate change -  
<https://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/>

### **Resources for staff training**

- ❑ Information on citizens assemblies  
<https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/citizens-assemblies-jurys/>
- ❑ **The Carbon Literacy Project** has free climate literacy toolkits for local authorities  
<https://carbonliteracy.com/>

### **Resources for Wales**

- ❑ **The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)** mission is to inspire, inform and enable people to achieve practical solutions for sustainability  
<https://cat.org.uk>
- ❑ **The Zero Carbon Britain Hub and Innovation Lab** exists to support Councils, communities and organisations to address the climate emergency, with a view to reducing carbon emissions and increasing resilience to climate change  
<https://cat.org.uk/info-resources/zero-carbon-britain/>
- ❑ **The Well Being of Future Generations Act** gives us the permission, ambition and legal obligation to improve our social, cultural, environmental and economic well being  
<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>
- ❑ **Cynnal Cymru** - Enabling action towards a fair and just society, a low carbon economy and a thriving natural environment  
<https://cynnalcymru.com>
- ❑ **The Climate Change Committee** - The path to net zero and progress on reducing emissions in Wales  
<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/the-path-to-net-zero-and-progress-reducing-emissions-in-wales/>
- ❑ **Welsh Government** Climate Change Strategy for Wales  
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/climate-change-research-emission-reduction-scenarios.pdf>

### **Sustainable Food**

- ❑ Many cities are working towards becoming a sustainable food place:  
<https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/>
- ❑ Brighton and Hove's Food Strategy Action Plan  
<https://bhfood.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Final-FULL-WEB-Food-Strategy-Action-Plan.pdf>