



## PRESS RELEASE

### **88 LEADERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, REPRESENTING HALF OF UK POPULATION, COME TOGETHER BEFORE COP26 TO SET AMBITIOUS NET ZERO TARGETS, DECADES AHEAD OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT**

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- 88 cross-party Mayors and Leaders of Councils, representing over half of the UK population, from London to rural Scotland, are now committed to meeting Net Zero at least five years earlier than the UK government
- All these authorities have signed UK100's 'Net Zero Pledge' that explicitly commits them to neutralising council emissions by 2030 and those of their residents and businesses (areawide emissions) by 2045
- Ahead of COP26, 23 more local authorities have joined UK100 and committed to reach Net Zero early, from all four corners of the UK including Labour-led Greater London Authority to Conservative-led Canterbury City Council (see full list in editor's notes below)
- Mayor Sadiq Khan, who represents 8.9 million Londoners, joins UK100 as its biggest member and with some of the most ambitious local climate action in the country
- Since December 2020, UK100's membership of Net Zero authorities has more than doubled, from 41 to 88, highlighting the ambitious action of councils from rural and metro councils alike.

There are now 88 cross-party local leaders, representing over half of the UK population and 34,030,804 million people, committed to meeting Net Zero at least five years earlier than the UK government.

In the weeks ahead of COP26, the annual UN climate conference hosted in 2021 by the UK, 23 more council leaders from all four corners of the UK signed up to the NGO UK100's 'Net Zero Pledge'.

The new UK100 members include South Tyneside Council, Suffolk County Council, Portsmouth City Council, East Ayrshire Council and Greater London Authority.

Mayor Sadiq Khan, who represents 8.9 million Londoners, joins UK100 as its biggest member and with some of the most ambitious local climate action in the country.

The new commitments, from rural and metro councils alike across the UK, come just over a week before COP26, with Cllr Douglas Reid highlighting the "innovative thinking and practical work" to meet Net Zero in East Ayrshire, Scotland.

And Cllr Ben Fitter-Harding, Conservative Leader of Canterbury City Council, says ahead of COP26 “we are signalling our intent to achieve Net Zero by joining other leading local authorities from across the country who are prioritising climate action”.

UK100's Net Zero Pledge commits the local authorities to cutting their council emissions to Net Zero by 2030 and those of their residents and businesses by 2045 - five years ahead of the UK government's 2050 target.

The UK government's Net Zero Strategy, released on Tuesday, references UK100's policy proposals in this area, as set out in UK100's Net Zero Local Leadership Communique.

The communique proposes a new, enhanced partnership with the UK government to accelerate the transition to Net Zero.

**Christopher Hammond, Network Membership Director at UK100, said:** “The fundamental challenge of our time is moving towards Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions to preserve our way of life and avert climate breakdown.

“As the international community comes together in Glasgow for COP26, global decisions need to be delivered at a local level. It's a task that will need bold leadership, legislative clarity, shifts in behaviour and enthusiastic adoption of new technologies.

“Local government is uniquely placed to overcome these challenges. Not only do they provide services, but they have a unique sphere of influence.

“Fantastic things are already happening from UK100's ambitious members, in county, city and town halls across the country. They are already playing a decisive role in tackling climate change ahead of the UK government's target, making their communities fairer, safer and greener.”

**Cllr Douglas Reid, Leader of East Ayrshire Council, said:** “We all now recognise that we are in the middle of a global climate emergency. Climate change has become the collective action problem of our era.

“In Scotland, we have the most ambitious climate legislation in the world. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, we have decided to go beyond the already ambitious Scottish Government targets.

“We've signed up to the UK100 and aim to become a net zero Council by 2030, and are doing all we can to help our wider communities to achieve net zero by 2045. Our ambition is to end our local contribution to climate change within a generation.

“In November this year the world will look to Scotland as the venue for the United Nations COP26 climate summit. This marks the most important moment for the international climate challenge since the Paris Agreement in 2015.

“Having this event on our doorstep provides us with the unique opportunity to show what is special about East Ayrshire and to highlight the innovative thinking and practical work already taking shape in our area to meet our net zero emission targets.”

**Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Leader of Portsmouth City Council, said:** “As Leader of Portsmouth City Council, I am really pleased to sign up to the UK100 Net Zero pledge.

“I believe that as city leaders, we have to play a significant part in bringing down greenhouse gas emissions and we are doing work across a range of areas in Portsmouth to do this, including looking at emissions from our own estate and working with partners across the city.

“We could do more if we had greater levers and therefore we are excited by the opportunity to work with the UK100’s network and government on how local government can contribute more to the national and global climate effort.”

**Cllr Ben Fitter-Harding, Leader of Canterbury City Council, said:** “Ahead of the crucial COP26 summit, here at Canterbury City Council we are signalling our intent to achieve net-zero by joining other leading local authorities from across the country who are prioritising climate action.

“Our district is a mix of rural, coastal and, in part, medieval areas, bringing their own opportunities and challenges as we strive to remove carbon emissions.

“By being part of the UK100 network we will be able to learn from other councils facing similar issues and help achieve our common goal.”

**Cllr Anna Smith, Deputy Leader and Incoming Leader of Cambridge City Council, said:** “I am delighted to sign the UK100 pledge on behalf of Cambridge City Council.

“The Council is committed to tackling the climate change emergency, and we have set a target to reduce the Council’s direct carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.

“We have also shared a vision for Cambridge to be net zero carbon by the same date, and are working collaboratively with our residents, businesses and partner organisations to try to reduce carbon emissions from the city as rapidly as possible.”

“However, we need much greater ambition, commitment and investment by national Government.

“In signing the pledge, we are joining the leaders of other local authorities in the UK100 in calling on the Government to accelerate delivery at a national level and provide the powers and funding needed to support local climate action.”

**Cllr Lynn Williams, Leader of Blackpool Council, said:** “I am very pleased to sign the UK100 pledge and join with councils from across the country who want the government to go further and faster on climate action.

“We are all guilty of taking for granted the systems on which we build our lives, ecological and man-made, natural and designed. The climate crisis challenges both.

“Discussions and conversations have shown me that in our community there are lots of energetic people and organisations with bright ideas just waiting to show how we can change the ways we live, work and play.

“Our efforts now can transform the lives of future generations. Together, we will re-make our town, society and planet, so that we will never again need to feel a pang of guilt as we consider our legacy.”

**Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of Brent Council, said:** “I am delighted that Brent Council will be joining the UK100 network of local authorities that are most restless to reach carbon neutrality by 2030.

“In Brent we recognise that net zero is not just a question for tomorrow, but **the** challenge of today - demanding the power of collective actions and ideas from people, places and institutions; in exchange for a brighter, more sustainable tomorrow.”

**Cllr Barry Wood, Leader of Cherwell District Council, said:** “Cherwell District Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and we are working to make all of our operations and activities zero carbon by 2030.

“We are delighted to join UK100 and sign the Net Zero Pledge. It will enable us to work closely and share best practice with other local authorities and policy experts who share our ambition, and it is a sign of the importance we place on our commitment to tackle the climate crisis.”

**Cllr Louise Gittins, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council, said:** “We are thrilled to sign up to the UK100 network’s Net Zero Pledge and join local authorities nationally to commit to reducing our carbon emissions as an organisation by 2030 and, by working alongside our residents and local businesses, to become a carbon neutral borough by 2045.”

“COP26 is a unique opportunity to change how we tackle the climate crisis. It is focused on collaborative working and our Climate Emergency response plan is clear that we need to work together, as a borough and alongside other local authorities and the Government.

“As one of the UK’s highest emitting local authorities we feel a real responsibility to take action now to contribute our fair share to keeping global temperature rise to below 1.5°C by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building sustainable, prosperous and healthy communities.

“By working together with our UK100 partners, we can make our collective voice stronger than ever, showcase our achievements in the borough and ensure that Cheshire West and Chester is at the heart of the green industrial revolution.”

**Cllr Virginia Taylor, Leader of Eden District Council, said:** “I’m delighted that Eden District Council is joining the UK100 network and that we will be part of the only association of Local Authorities across the UK committed to bringing each constituent council’s emissions to Net-Zero by 2030.

Membership of the UK100 will put the Council in both national and international forums sharing best practice and will help to progress Eden’s climate change objectives and biodiversity commitments.”

**Cllr Richard Cook, Leader of Gloucester City Council, said:** “Having committed to delivering net zero emissions across Gloucester City Council’s functions by 2030 back in 2019, I was delighted at the Council’s recent, unanimous vote to join the UK100 network and bring forward the city’s district-wide net zero target to 2045.

“The escalating climate emergency presents an unprecedented challenge to all tiers of government, and particularly the towns and cities providing essential frontline services upon which the public rely.

“The demands that will be increasingly placed on Local Government to both mitigate and adapt to a rapidly warming world mean the kind of peer support, knowledge sharing, and collective voice provided by UK100 is more important than ever. I look forward to Gloucester playing a leading role in this process.”

**Cllr Zoe Nicholson, Leader of Lewes District Council, said:** “We are fully committed to our journey to net zero and have many aspects of our strategy are already underway in Lewes district towards our commitment of becoming fully climate resilient and achieving carbon net zero by 2030, and our signing of the UK100’s Net Zero Pledge ahead of COP26 serves to reinforce this work.

“We know that working with the community is key to meeting our climate action goals in Lewes district and becoming part of this network enables us to also work collaboratively outside the district with other local authorities.

“We look forward to sharing knowledge and working with our partners to find innovative solutions, alongside strengthening and accelerating this nation’s response to the global climate emergency we are all facing.”

**Cllr Peray Ahmet, Leader of the London Borough of Haringey, said:** “We hope that together we can increase the lobbying power of councils delivering this challenging but vital carbon reduction ambition and that together we can share the joy (and the challenges) of addressing the Climate Change challenges we face.

“As an authority we will help you through officer and member participation at events and providing you with case studies so others can learn from our experiences.”

**Mayor of Newham Rokhsana Fiaz OBE, London Borough of Newham, said:** “I am delighted that Newham is now signed up to UK100’s new ambitious Climate Zero Pledge and membership.

“It is a really important and timely declaration in our commitment to combat climate change and accelerates our ambitions to reduce our damaging and toxic emissions as we approach COP26.

“The pledge commits us to a goal of carbon zero in terms of council operations by 2030 and carbon zero for the borough area by 2045. This strengthens our previous goal of 2050, which we set in 2019 when we first declared a Climate Emergency.

“This is important because we know that the upcoming COP gathering of world leaders will be the most significant since the Paris accords. There is a huge imperative for governments, including our own, to put in both the resources, coordination and actions to rapidly and radically reduce emissions. Every year we fail to do this will have a catastrophic impact and we simply do not have a choice but to do this now, and rapidly.

“Of course, we are acutely aware that this more ambitious goal will bring challenges, especially in the context of government cuts and the issues we are grappling with as we emerge from Covid 19. Of course, there must be far greater funding and coordination from government, to support councils like ours in delivering carbon reductions.

“In joining UK100 we will be part of a common advocacy and framework. This announcement today begins a month of setting out and stepping up of our actions as we approach the COP conference. We will be taking this message out into the wider community -- that we stand ready to take forward our roadmap to carbon zero. But the government must deliver with the resources and power to get on with this, and so we will be raising our voices on behalf of our residents.”

**Mayor John Biggs, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, said:** “We are planting trees, investing in renewable energy and electric charging points, improving the energy efficiency of our schools and buildings, and working hard to improve recycling boroughwide. We are focused on reducing reliance on petrol and phasing out diesel vehicles.

“Our boroughwide journey to net zero includes establishing on behalf of our local strategic partnership a live Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan for the borough, which we aim to launch during COP26.

“We look forward to working in collaboration with members of UK100 to call for urgent collective actions to tackle the climate emergency, to deliver social, environmental and economic benefits and support a just transition toward net zero. We also call on Government to provide the leadership, resources, appropriate guidance and legislation needed in the journey to net zero”.

**Cllr Alan Waters, Leader of Norwich City Council, said:** “Being a member of UK100 is really important to Norwich City Council. Councils have an important leadership role in creating low-carbon and climate resilient communities.

“This collaborative approach in sharing knowledge and best practice will allow us to quicken the pace of our decarbonisation pathways.

“By working together we can lobby government with a louder voice to provide the necessary resources to combat the climate and biodiversity emergencies.

“Change is needed urgently, and people, businesses and institutions will need to work together like never before to make our future environment a sustainable and liveable one for all generations to come”

**Cllr Tracey Dixon, Leader of South Tyneside Council, said:** “This isn’t about talk, it's about action. It's about leading on the issues that we can directly affect and using our collective power to bring about national policy change.

“We’ve already set ourselves ambition targets as a council and we are delivering on those. Our next challenge is to work in partnership across the borough and beyond. The most significant changes need national policy change and significant investment from central government. By working together as UK100 we can hopefully make a real difference on bringing forward those big national policy changes we are so desperate to see.”

“Signing this pledge is not just good for the planet but for the people of South Tyneside, who deserve warm homes, affordable energy, clean air, local and seasonal food, access to thriving nature and healthy landscapes, and to live in a place we can all be proud of.

“Local authorities across the country are leading the fight against climate change in our communities, we now need national policy change to help us go further and bring others on the journey with us.”

**Cllr Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, said:** “Rising to the challenge of climate change has long been a top priority for Suffolk County Council; our Greenest County Awards started back in 2007, we were amongst the first councils to declare a Climate Emergency, and we’ve an ambitious goal to be a net zero authority by 2030.

“In Suffolk, we’re planting hundreds of thousands of trees, rolling out over 100 rural EV charging points, ensuring battery storage and renewable energy generation are a firm part of our estate, installing intelligent LED street lighting, and much more. So I’m delighted to join the UK100’s Net Zero Pledge.

“We know that to address climate change everyone in our society needs to act; whether that’s a local council, a school, community organisation, businesses, or each of us as individuals. We all need to think about the choices we make in our day to day lives. This is why Suffolk Public Sector Leaders have agreed the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan, which will help drive a green economic recovery in our county and make sure everyone in our communities can be involved.

“I’m delighted to see so many councils making our environment a clear priority and coming together under the UK100 banner. It’s only by working together locally, nationally, and internationally that we’ll deliver the change that’s needed.”

**Cllr Roger Truelove, Leader of Swale Borough Council, said:** “When we took office in 2019, one of our first actions was to declare a climate and ecological emergency and set ambitious targets for the council and the borough.

“This has been backed up by an action plan adopted in April 2020. Swale Borough Council now runs a fleet of electric vans, has developed a policy for new homes to emit less carbon than permitted under the current building regulations and started to make our own estate more energy efficient.

“We are delighted that our ambition is being recognised by membership of UK100. Local councils are leading on climate action and we look forward to learning about new solutions from other ambitious councils.

“COP26 gives us a fantastic opportunity to lobby Government to provide the finance and powers councils need to do so much more to meet our ambitious targets for the borough.”

**Cllr Sarah Nelmes, Leader of Three Rivers District Council, said:** “The Climate Emergency is one of the greatest challenges of our generation, transcending party politics and geographical boundaries.

“As a council we declared our own Climate Emergency in 2019 and earlier this year set out our own Climate Emergency Strategy to work with residents and businesses to tackle climate change.

“But we cannot do it alone. Urgent action is needed at a national level. That’s why as a council we are proud to sign the Net Zero Pledge and work cross party with members across the UK and beyond to accelerate the delivery of climate action.”

**Cllr Emily Smith, Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council, said:** “Tackling the climate emergency is a key priority for Vale of White Horse District Council. We need to work together and learn from each other if we are to find workable and effective solutions to meet our carbon neutral targets.

“Ahead of COP26, signing the Net Zero Pledge and joining UK:100 puts us in a much better position to share knowledge with those who face similar issues. It also means we will be part of a wider community that works together to bring about genuine change, while helping to ensure that our own ambitions and ideas also result in meaningful action.”

**Mayor Peter Taylor, Watford Borough Council, said:** “Watford Borough Council is working extremely hard to make the changes needed to tackle climate change – whether that’s through our sustainable travel strategy, the revitalisation of our natural spaces, or many of our other projects.

“That’s why we’re so excited to be taking the Net-Zero Pledge ahead of COP26, doing our part as a town to combat climate change, and create a greener, cleaner future – both for Watford, and the world.”

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

The Mayors/Leaders from each of UK100's 23 new members are:

1. Cllr Lynn Williams, Blackpool Council
2. Cllr Muhammed Butt, Brent Council
3. Cllr Anna Smith, Cambridge City Council
4. Cllr Ben Fitter-Harding, Canterbury City Council
5. Cllr Barry Wood, Cherwell District Council
6. Cllr Louise Gittins, Cheshire West and Chester Council
7. Cllr Douglas Reid, East Ayrshire Council
8. Cllr Virginia Taylor, Eden District Council
9. Cllr Richard Cook, Gloucester City Council
10. Mayor Sadiq Khan, Greater London Authority
11. Cllr Zoe Nicholson, Lewes District Council
12. Cllr Peray Ahmet, London Borough of Haringey
13. Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz, London Borough of Newham
14. Mayor John Biggs, London Borough of Tower Hamlets
15. Cllr Alan Waters, Norwich City Council
16. Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Portsmouth City Council
17. Cllr Paul Foster, South Ribble Borough Council
18. Cllr Tracey Dixon, South Tyneside Council
19. Cllr Matthew Hicks, Suffolk County Council
20. Cllr Roger Truelove, Swale Borough Council
21. Cllr Sarah Nelmes, Three Rivers District Council
22. Cllr Emily Smith, Vale of White Horse District Council
23. Mayor Peter Taylor, Watford Borough Council

### **UK100's Net Zero Pledge:**

"As local leaders across the UK, we recognise our responsibility to tackle the climate emergency and take bold action towards Net Zero.

"We will continue to lead the UK's response to climate change, acting sooner than the government's goal by making substantial progress within the next decade to deliver Net Zero. We will use our experience and achievements to advocate to the UK government in order to accelerate the delivery of ambitious local climate action. With greater powers and funding, we would go further.

"We commit to do everything within our power and influence to rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and work with our residents and businesses to bring our wider communities' emissions in line with Net Zero as soon as possible.

"We pledge to understand our impact on climate change, prioritise where action needs to be taken and monitor progress towards our goals. We will reduce our emissions at source and

limit the use of carbon offsets as part of the global effort to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

“We are closer to the people who live and work in our communities, so we have a better understanding of their needs. This means we can collaborate with them to build consensus for the solutions we need to transition to a Net Zero society that delivers multiple benefits and is fair, just and works for everyone.

**UK100 Net Zero Local Leadership Communique:** [www.bit.ly/UK100communique](http://www.bit.ly/UK100communique)

**UK100 website:** [www.uk100.org](http://www.uk100.org)