



UK:
100

**Local climate action
in the age of crisis**

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

About Us:

UK100 is a cross-party membership organisation that supports 110 of the most ambitious local and regional leaders to go further and faster on their Net Zero and Clean Air targets.

Local authorities have a unique leadership role in tackling the climate crisis. And UK100 members have pledged to realise a Net Zero future that delivers for people and planet ahead of the government's 2050 target.

Our Mission:

UK100's primary purpose is to support a local-led rapid transition to Net Zero and Clean Air.

We do this through collaboration. To accelerate action, we believe in bringing together the most influential leaders across the country to learn together and agree on priorities for legislative and regulatory change while empowering them to engage with national decision-makers.

We provide our network with the knowledge, tools and connections to make this happen.



Foreword:

“ 2023 became the year that the established consensus on climate action was stress-tested. International conflicts, disinformation, spiralling costs and culture wars have all worked to undermine the ambition and resolve of national politicians from all parties.

But the climate crisis continues to deepen its impacts. The global June - August period was the hottest on record, although it might not have felt like that in the UK! High energy costs, which were unthinkable a few years ago have become the new normal. The environmental, social and economic costs of ‘not zero’ continue to mount up. It is truly a debt we cannot afford.

The Uxbridge by-election showed how one result can upend years of progress with the political potency of employing misinformation tactics. Although our climate conversations

have adapted, national targets moved, and ambition hushed, the undeniable reality is that delivery must continue at pace and scale. To unlock the economic potential of Net Zero, we need decisions to be taken locally, backed up by the support necessary for our regions to drive the UK into the next industrial age. The Covid pandemic inquiry is a cautionary tale of the culture and consequences of a highly centralised state running things in a top-down manner.

Despite these headwinds, local government ambition remains strong. Our members represent over 60% of the UK population and demonstrate the groundswell of cross-party climate commitment. And this year we expanded our work to enable them to deliver. Our flagship **Powers in Place** handbook, showed how local leaders are delivering for their communities. The report is the most comprehensive examination in the UK of the powers available to local leaders to drive Net Zero. We built on this work by collaborating

with the government’s former Net Zero Tsar, Chris Skidmore MP, and the Local Mission Zero Network on **The Future is Local** report.

We trained a new cohort of councillors as part of **Climate Leadership Academy** who joined last year’s group in advocating for the sector. Councillors from this network gave evidence before the **Environmental Audit Committee** to show MPs how disjointed funding is while hamstringing their efforts to tackle air pollution in their communities. At the same time, from toolkits to case studies, this year we broadened the resources available to our members.

2024 is going to be difficult. Climate action will likely be weaponised in the upcoming General Election, but we will continue to support our members, demonstrating that we are ready to design and deliver sustainable solutions - that are beneficial to their health, homes and pockets.

Christopher Hammond
Chief Executive, UK100



2023 at a glance:

More than **350m**

The number of people reached with our message on the importance of local authority climate action.

£130m

The estimated cost of applications for short-term, disjointed funding pots since 2019. After a year of campaigning on the issue, all major parties have agreed that local authority funding needs to change.

110 local authorities signed up to our Net Zero pledge

A tripling of membership since the pledge launched in 2020. New members include the UK's first Green Party-controlled council.

47% ... and a growing issue

Polling suggests that 47% Brits now believe there is so much conflicting information about climate change they don't know what to believe. Misinformation has been on the rise throughout 2023. UK100 has worked to develop a new programme for members faced with the rise in misinformation targeted at local Net Zero initiatives.

10 mentions in UK Parliament

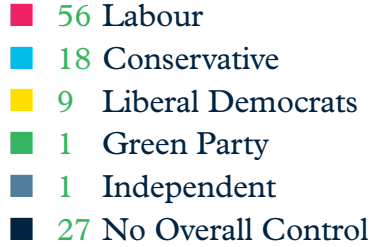
Alongside UK100 members giving evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee, our research has been referenced at least ten times in Parliament, with UK100 securing a debate on local Net Zero.

1 key report

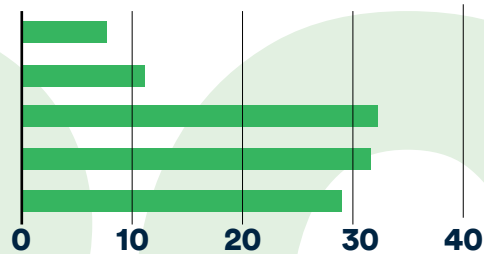
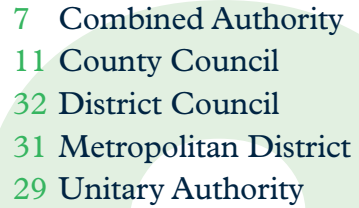
Our **Powers in Place** handbook, is the most comprehensive assessment ever done of the powers available to local authorities to accelerate climate action in their communities.

Our Members:

Political administrations



Type & tier



60%
of the UK's
population is
covered by our
network

Geographical distribution



In the News:

■ From the [New Statesman](#) to [The i](#), [BBC Radio 4](#) to [LBC](#), across almost 1,000 broadcast, print and online media hits, UK100 reached a potential audience of over 350 million people in 2023.

■ Highlights included a million-strong audience on the BBC's flagship [Panorama](#) programme and coverage in more than 250 regional newspapers, from [Alloa & Hillfoots Advertiser](#) to the [Witney Gazette](#).

We continue to promote our members in the media

Across 2023, UK100 has continued to platform the views of members and share their success stories.

We supported Chloe Turner from Stroud District Council with pieces for the Stroud News & Journal and [Environment Journal](#)



Our chief executive on the BBC's Panorama

on the council's positive nature restoration efforts. We also supported Jane Hugo from Blackpool Council with a piece for the [Local Government Chronicle](#) on the importance of Net Zero training for local councillors.

Meanwhile, coverage of [Powers in Place](#) reports featured case studies from almost 100 local authorities, from [Calderdale](#) to [Cornwall](#).



Website

We are continuing to update and improve our website, including the newly revamped [Knowledge Hub](#). We provide a one-stop shop for local Net Zero inspiration, political toolkits and practical case studies. In 2024 we are looking to relaunch the site.

- Up to **30,000** monthly unique website views.
- More than **340,000** impressions.
- More than **1,200** new followers.
- More than **100,000** profile visits.
- More than **3,000** subscribers.

Impact in 2023: Membership

GROUNDBREAKING COLLABORATION IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Our Local Power in Action Programme empowered a groundbreaking collaboration between Gloucestershire's seven local authorities — a region of almost 650,000 people, nearly 30,000 businesses and an estimated 21 million day-trippers — to develop a shared vision and commitment to transport decarbonisation.

Together, the councils aspire to be leaders and exemplars for the UK as they accelerate towards Net Zero.

The countywide strategy encourages shifts in travel behaviour to reach these goals. Updated Local Plans and Transport Plans will support sustainable neighbourhoods and active and public transit.

This unified leadership is a milestone



All Gloucestershire councils sign up to work together on region-wide transport decarbonisation

demonstrating the power of ambitious coalitions for regional climate action.

Read more: [All Gloucestershire's councils](#)

[unite for collective action to deliver Net Zero transport](#)

Watch more: [Gloucestershire Region-wide action on Net Zero transport](#)

Membership

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY GRADUATE TAKES MESSAGE TO MPS

As the Class of 2023 graduates from the Climate Leadership Academy, previous participants continue to build climate expertise and confidence within the UK100 network.

Cllr Peter Schweir of Essex County Council exemplified this by stepping up to provide evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee's clean air inquiry. Equipped with knowledge from the Academy, Cllr Schweir called for a national strategy and greater devolution of powers to local authorities. His leadership demonstrates the Academy's impact in creating informed climate advocates ready to represent UK100 on the national stage.

Read more: [UK100 members tell Environmental Audit Committee how competitive funding is failing communities on air pollution](#)

Watch more: [Evidence to Environmental Audit Committee's clean air inquiry](#)

UK100 MEMBERS SELECTED FOR FUNDING REFORM PILOT

Following the publication of our Powers in Place handbook, which highlighted the scale of local Net Zero barriers posed by short-term, competitive funding pots, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) selected three UK100 members to pilot a new simplified funding approach.

At the same time, UK100 has continued working with the Labour Shadow Cabinet on funding as the party announced, during its conference in October, a commitment to ending short-term local authority funding.

Cross-party consensus is a small but crucial step in the right direction towards sustainable, long-term investment in local Net Zero action.



The Climate Leadership Academy in Birmingham

Our evidence and advocacy has directly shaped steps towards long-term, empowering finance for ambitious climate action.

Read more: [Your authority on UK local government - Councils chosen to trial simplified funding delivery](#)
[Powers in Place: The handbook of local authority Net Zero powers](#)

Impact in 2023: Powers in Place

BRINGING LOCAL NET ZERO TO THE HEART OF PARLIAMENT

We leveraged our flagship Powers in Place handbook as a tool for high-profile parliamentary advocacy for local climate empowerment.

With support from Wera Hobhouse MP, we secured a summer debate on local authority Net Zero delivery and the issues exposed by the report. It saw support across parties for key recommendations around long-term funding and devolved powers.

The Government outlined plans for better collaboration with local authorities through ministerial forums and improved guidance, while opposition parties called for increased transport, planning and fiscal devolution. This cross-party endorsement of local authority empowerment shows our influence continues generating momentum to give local leaders and

communities the powers and resources they need to accelerate place-based climate action.

Read the full debate: [Reaching Net Zero: Local Government Role - Hansard](#)

'WE DON'T KNOW': ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Collaborating across party lines, UK100 helped draft over 100 parliamentary questions that uncovered critical insights on empowering local Net Zero delivery. Our evidence-based questions pressed government departments for greater transparency around the labyrinth of local Net Zero funds. Despite numerous questions from MPs, the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero could not identify the total spend for local Net Zero. Sometimes, the answer “we don't know” is the most revealing. Through influential, non-partisan advocacy, we are shining a spotlight on the complex barriers and gaps undermining



**Wera
Hobhouse
MP**



local climate leadership and driving the momentum for change.

Find a selection of Parliamentary Questions here: [Parliamentary Questions on local Net Zero](#)

Powers in Place

FIGHTING TO END THE TWO-SPEED APPROACH TO LOCAL NET ZERO AND PLANNING

UK100 collaborated with the Better Planning Coalition on a Levelling Up Bill (LURB) amendment spearheaded by Lord Ravensdale requiring “special regard” to Net Zero in planning decisions.

Though the government initially rejected it, persistent advocacy by engaged Peers secured concessions. The final Act mandates “regard” for climate change in developing national planning policy, not the comprehensive duty sought, but it is still progress.

The amendment was the last climate amendment to the LURB. Securing any climate commitments, aided by evidence from across our membership, marks a step forward in aligning planning with Net

Zero. Our nonpartisan influence continues generating momentum for the powers and direction local authorities need to realise national climate goals.

Read more on the amendment here:
[Christopher Hammond: Ministers’ levelling up bill stance threatens Net Zero push | Local Government Chronicle \(LGC\)](#)





Chris Skidmore OBE MP

Impact in 2023: Collaboration

COMBATTING MISINFORMATION

As climate misinformation permeates communities, UK100 has spearheaded efforts to track the rise and support our members to manage it. Partnering with experts, we designed and hosted interactive misinformation masterclasses arming local leaders with strategies to detect and counter false narratives.

Through case studies and media training, these workshops built members' capabilities and confidence to tackle misinformation proactively. Post-event surveys confirmed members felt better prepared to identify and respond to misinformation. With the issue set to grow in 2024, it is only through developing organisational confidence and capabilities that local authorities can weather the storm.

Find the UK100 masterclass handout here:
[Misinformation Media Masterclass handout | UK100](#)

THE FUTURE IS LOCAL

In 2023, UK100 worked closely with the Rt Hon Chris Skidmore OBE MP, the government's former Net Zero tsar and Local Mission Zero Network founder on The Future is Local report, produced in collaboration with our members.

The report echoed our Powers in Place recommendations by calling for local authority climate empowerment through funding reform, planning alignment and more effective local-national partnerships. Securing hundreds of media hits and reaching over 300 million people, the influential advocacy tool underscores UK100's ability to collaborate with its partners to help shape the narrative and public debate on enabling community-led climate action.

Read the report here: [The Future Is Local: The Local Mission Zero Network Report](#)



UK: 100 in 2024

VOICES, VOTES AND VISION

Driving Progress on Local Climate Action in 2024:

“ The climate crisis transcends party politics. As co-presidents of UK100, we represent Labour and Conservative but are united in the urgent need for ambitious climate action.

In 2024, the stakes could not be higher. As the UK gears up for local, regional and national elections, some will seek to exploit divisions and spread misinformation for political gain. We cannot let climate action become another partisan football. The scientific facts are clear, as are the social and economic benefits of effective Net Zero action with fairness at its heart.

And we cannot let national and international setbacks be an excuse for local inaction. If anything, it makes local leadership more important than ever. Our communities need practical solutions, drawn from the ground-up and adapted to local contexts.

Despite increasing international and national polarisation, collaboration, not conflict, is the only way forward.

That is why in 2024, UK100 has a key role to play in redoubling efforts to accelerate inclusive, cross-party climate action. Programmes like the Climate Leadership Academy and Local Power in Action will continue to equip the next generation of local climate leaders with the skills to deliver a brighter future for people and planet.

Together, we will continue making the case to this and the next government, whatever its political makeup, that when properly resourced and empowered, local and regional authorities are uniquely positioned to drive emissions reductions while boosting local economic growth and improving the lives and livelihoods of our

communities. Flagship reports like **Powers in Place** and **The Future is Local** have laid out the policy changes needed — from funding reform to planning alignment.

Collaboration will be more critical than ever next year. Now is the time to drown out the distracting voices of disunity. To come together across parties and places to deliver the practical climate solutions our communities are crying out for. Solutions that cut energy bills, deliver affordable transport and skilled green jobs, restore nature and clean our air.

The future is local. The future is cross-party. Collaboration and the work of UK100 has never been more important.



**Mayor Tracy Brabin
and Cllr Richard Clewer**
UK100 Co-presidents

Our Prospectus for the Year Ahead:

PUTTING CLIMATE ACTION AT THE HEART OF DEVOLUTION

UK100's key campaign in 2024 calls on national government and political parties to put climate action at the heart of the devolution agenda. Empowering local government with the powers, pounds, and people to deliver a Net Zero transition that improves lives and livelihoods.

UK POWER NETWORK: REGIONAL ROADSHOWS

In 2024, UK100 will support UK Power Networks in delivering a series of regional roadshows to engage local authorities on decarbonisation, local area energy planning and ensuring electricity networks are Net Zero ready.

LOCAL POWER IN ACTION

This programme provides political consultants to help leaders overcome challenges in implementing ambitious climate projects. In 2024, we will empower three of our members to turn commitments into on-the-ground impact on retrofit, renewable energy and regional advocacy.

KNOWLEDGE HUB

In 2024, the Knowledge Hub will expand our resources to showcase and support local Net Zero delivery across our network. Alongside a knowledge-sharing events programme, this unique resource will provide time-poor local leaders with the inspiration and tools they need.

COUNTRYSIDE CLIMATE NETWORK

The UK's rural community plays an essential role in our move towards Net Zero. The Countryside Climate Network will amplify the rural voice as part of our national policy advocacy.

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The Climate Leadership Academy returns to coach a new cohort of leaders in 2024. Meanwhile, we're supporting our graduate network to turn their learning into grassroots leadership on everything from public engagement to clean air and climate funding.

Thank You to our Members and Supporters:

Members of our Business Supporters Network in 2023 include:



UK Power Networks

UK Power Networks is the UK's biggest electricity distributor delivering power to 8.4million homes and businesses across London the east and south of England.

The company keeps the lights on across 29,250 square kilometres, serving 19 million people from Cromer in the east

to Brighton on the south coast.

UK Power Networks' Distribution System Operator (DSO) works with local authorities across the regions they serve, to ensure sufficient electricity capacity to support the authorities' decarbonisation plans including anticipated uptake of electric vehicles, heat pumps and renewables generation.

Energy Saving Trust

Energy Saving Trust and UK100 are pleased to be working together and are looking forward to supporting local council leaders to lead on a rapid transition to Net Zero.

The trust is an independent organisation dedicated to promoting energy efficiency, low carbon transport and sustainable energy use. Energy Saving Trust aims to address the climate emergency and

deliver the wider benefits of clean energy as we transition to Net Zero.

Energy Saving Trust empowers householders to make better choices, deliver transformative programmes for governments and support businesses with strategy, research and assurance –

enabling everyone to play their part in building a sustainable future.



We're always keen to work with partners who share our mission. Email info@uk100.org to find out more

The image features a dark blue background with large, light blue, semi-transparent letters 'U', 'K', and 'O' scattered across it. In the center, the text 'UK:100' is displayed in white. The 'UK' is in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by a colon consisting of two small green dots. The '100' is also in a bold, sans-serif font. To the right of the text, there are two dark green circles stacked vertically. The overall design is modern and minimalist.

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