

Net Zero Local Leadership Communique



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Communique:

Delivering a Net Zero UK

A joint statement by the metropolitan mayors and UK100 and its constituent members

July 2021

The UK government has set the target that the country will be Net Zero by 2050 and will have achieved 78% reduction in emissions by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. Metropolitan combined authorities, cities and local authorities are playing an essential role in ensuring the UK meets its Net Zero target and many have committed to ambitious targets. They are already at the vanguard of delivering climate change action on the ground, unlocking good jobs across our communities in the process.

Regional, city and local authorities must be the partners of choice for government in the development of, and delivering on, Net Zero commitments. As convenors of place, communities, and economies, we are combining the influence of the public, private and third sectors, education and research, and local residents, to better understand Net Zero challenges and opportunities, and ensure its practical implementation at a local level.

This statement proposes a new, enhanced partnership between the UK government, devolved governments and regional, city and local authorities to accelerate the transition to Net Zero. Our commitment is to drive economic recovery through growth in green jobs and skills and support the UK's international position as a Net Zero pioneer in ways that do not penalise the poorest in our communities. This enhanced partnership is built upon six priorities for immediate action.



Financing the transition

Regional, city and local authorities are already at the forefront of driving innovation through their respective economies and supply chains, in everything from battery technology to behaviour change. Sustainable funding and financing is essential to create a new green marketplace and deliver action towards Net Zero. **Ensuring that the UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) has a Net Zero mandate that delivers local investment must be a priority, to support and enable local and regional projects and programmes.** The UKIB will have capacity to work with local, city and regional authorities to develop investable proposals for place-based Net Zero projects and programmes, and it should provide development capital and leverage additional private investment to kickstart local energy schemes that are at too early a stage for private finance.



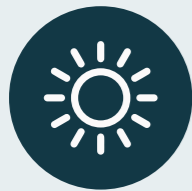
Decarbonising transport

Local transport authorities are at the forefront of the future mobility revolution pioneering cycling schemes, zero emission bus fleets and unlocking active travel. In addition to sustained national investment in walking, cycling and public transport, the transition to low and zero emission travel requires electric vehicles to be affordable to all who need them. **Reducing the high costs of connecting EV charging networks to the grid should be prioritised to enable a seamless vehicle charging network across the UK.** Not only should costs of connecting EV charging networks be reduced, every local, city and regional authority should be included in designing and shaping the charging infrastructure across its area for public, freight, and bus networks.



Decarbonising homes and buildings

Authorities have already demonstrated that they are well-placed to deliver government's domestic Net Zero initiatives, successfully delivering their part of the Green Homes Grant, the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and other schemes of devolved governments. Many are working to ensure that all new and existing buildings and homes meet the highest efficiency standards, in particular the phasing out of gas boilers which is essential if our buildings are to contribute to rather than detract from Net Zero commitments. But to build capacity and supply chains, **a UK government-led, long-term plan must be put in place that supports all local authorities to decarbonise new and existing buildings and homes in their areas.** The plan should at least meet the manifesto commitment of £9bn public investment to deliver Net Zero in our homes and buildings and should seek to leverage further private investment to meet this goal.



Energy

Regional and other authorities are already pioneering new approaches to energy systems and generation and present the opportunity for smart decentralised energy systems at a place-based level to integrate supply and demand more effectively. But these 'energy innovation zones' are few and far between. **Strategic energy bodies, or similar mechanisms, should be established with the responsibilities and resources to address market failure in energy systems, with the mandate to satisfy Net Zero targets.** These should ensure a duty of collaboration between public bodies holding place responsibilities around waste, transport and spatial planning, and distribution network operators, and consistent approaches to modelling and data usage. They should be resourced and responsible for local area energy planning which delivers whole system infrastructure, and informs Net Zero-led capital investment, at the most effective geographic level.



Nature

We need to ensure that we are managing our natural environments to both adapt to, and mitigate, the impact of carbon emissions and climate change and to help nature thrive. As the focal point for extensive land-use engagement and relationships with farmers and nature-focused NGOs, local and combined authorities are already trailblazing the Net Zero benefits of natural capital recovery and Net Zero agriculture. **A clear target must be added to the Environment Bill to reverse the decline in species and habitats by 2030, supported by the appropriate resourcing of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.** Legislation and supporting action should be underpinned by progressive incentives and investment models; all aligned with enhanced policy and regulatory frameworks.



Local powers

Local and combined authorities are already leading in many aspects of the Net Zero agenda, but they could go so much further and faster if given the scope to do so. National policy and regulatory frameworks must be revised and co-ordinated to enable local, regional, national and devolved governments to work more effectively in partnership towards Net Zero and adapting to climate change. **The UK government should put in place a Net Zero Local Powers Bill which both permits, obliges and resources relevant levels of authority to undertake climate change action to satisfy the Climate Change Act, meet carbon budgets and deliver an effective pathway to Net Zero.** The bill should be accompanied by appropriate policy and guidance which identifies public funding and potential private sector investment levers, and better cross-departmental alignment within government to support local areas that satisfy these obligations.

Get in touch

To find out more about the work we do
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