

Powers in Place briefing



Local Powers

The Key Takeaway

Despite the progress of a handful of trailblazers, local authorities are still waiting for the Government to put the necessary resources and powers in place to deliver on their Net Zero ambitions and achieve our national climate goals.

About UK100

UK100 is a network of local leaders who have pledged to lead a rapid transition to Net Zero with Clean Air in their communities ahead of the government's target.



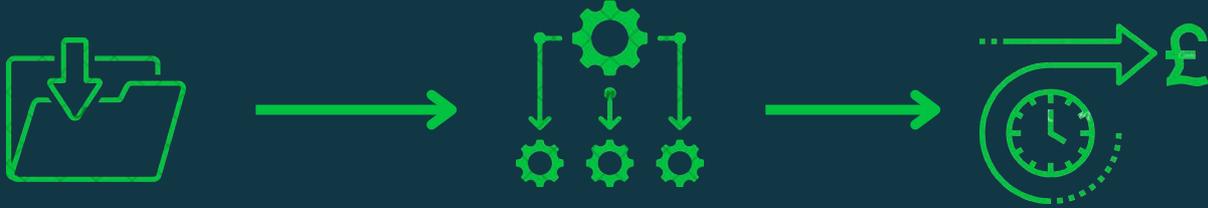
Executive Summary

Powers in Place is a handbook of the powers that local authorities have to deliver Net Zero, and whether they can deploy these powers effectively to create change. The report covers five areas - powers, transport, buildings, energy and waste.

It finds that local authorities are hamstrung by a lack of a defined role in Net Zero Delivery, conflicting remits of public agencies which prevent ambitious authorities from delivering on their aims and insufficient and competitive funding.



Key recommendations



The UK Government should introduce a Net Zero Local Powers Bill that permits and obliges relevant levels of local authorities to deliver an effective pathway to Net Zero.

A Local-National Net Zero Delivery Framework should be co-designed between local authorities and the UK Government, overseen by a National Net Zero Delivery Unit.

Ministers should end competitive short-term funding and replace it with strategic, needs-based, long-term funding.

Challenges

Lack of funding:

Limited revenue-raising powers, extensive funding cuts from 2010-2020, Covid-19 and inflation have strained local government budgets. Local authorities lack authority to align central funding with Net Zero plans. Competitive bids for projects drain limited council funds and hinder skill development and local supply chains.



Limited existing powers:



Lack of a defined role and statutory duty in Net Zero leads to prioritisation of other duties due to limited resources. Inconsistent national government policies create a lack of clarity and confusion.

Staff expertise:

Authorities struggle to hire skilled staff with the right knowledge, hampering compliance with new laws like the Procurement Bill. Limited training and time available to build capacity.



Legal and procurement challenges:

Fear of legal challenges drive local authorities to conduct their own legal analysis for major projects which can slow progress. Complex procurement processes require early incorporation of Net Zero compliance into long-term contracts like waste contracts.



Case Studies



Greater Manchester Combined Authority and West Midlands Combined Authority have entered into trailblazer deals for enhanced devolution. The deals include devolved 'Transport for London' style powers to deliver a more joined-up local transport system, and piloting the devolution of Net Zero funding from 2025.

[Read Powers in Place](#)

Contact Details: tunisha.kapoor@uk100.org



Westminster City Council developed the Westminster Green Investment, a Local Climate Bond which enables residents to invest in carbon reduction projects, providing the Council with low-cost finance for Net Zero projects. The bond was issued in March 2023 and was fully subscribed, raising £1 million, within nine days.

[Read Briefing Notes on Transport, Buildings, Energy Infrastructure, Waste and Nature](#)