

# Blueprint Coalition Progress Tracker

October 2022



*With support from the Local Government Association and London Councils*



# The Blueprint Coalition

**As a group of local government, environmental and research organisations, we came together to set out a blueprint for how the government can accelerate climate action at the local level.**

Councils are an indispensable partner in reaching the UK's national target of net zero by 2050 in a way that will also contribute to economic recovery, nature's renewal and tackling inequalities. Our blueprint report sets out the national leadership, policies, powers and funding needed to empower local authorities to deliver.

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## Summary

**In 2020, the Blueprint Coalition set out a comprehensive set of recommendations, based on extensive research with local authorities, on how the right support from central government could support local delivery within England for action on climate and nature, and boost sustainable economic growth.**

Over the last two years, the coalition has engaged with relevant government departments via meetings, correspondence and submission of evidence, seeking a constructive partnership between central and local government to deliver on our shared ambition for delivering on net zero targets and fostering resilient and beautiful places. Such a partnership is essential - the government's legally binding targets for climate and nature will not be met without local delivery.

The government published the Net Zero Strategy in Oct 2021. This recognised the need to take a place-based approach to climate action, the need for greater clarity between central and local government, and to address capacity and funding issues. The Local Net Zero Forum held its first meeting in June 2022, chaired by BEIS and including senior officials from across Whitehall departments and local government including the LGA and ADEPT. The Forum has established several task and finish groups. However as of October 2022, the Forum has only met twice.

**Given the importance of government support we decided to carry out an assessment of progress on the original recommendations using a traffic light scoring system alongside our analysis. It is a worrying picture with not a single action scoring a green rating.**

Some progress has been made in some areas and we hope that the Local Net Zero Forum and its associated stakeholder group will help us to speed up and scale up local delivery. But overall, the assessment points towards inadequate progress and insufficient support for councils to be able to deliver across all the key areas needed if they are to meet net zero and nature restoration targets. Barriers include fragmented, short-term and competitively allocated funding, a lack of clarity and direction in key policy areas and delays to essential guidance. These concerns have been raised on a number of occasions by the Coalition and other bodies such as the [Climate Change Committee](#), which recently concluded that “it remains unclear how central, devolved and local government will operate in concert to deliver Net Zero”.

## Key conclusions from the six themes are:

### **Growing the zero and low carbon economy**

There are some examples of alignment with climate goals linked to devolution deals, notably that the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership plans to be a negative carbon region - though how this is delivered will be important. But in general, there is not enough emphasis on net zero in devolution deals, or in other key funding streams such as the Shared Prosperity Fund. There are worrying signs that the government’s Growth Plan is about growth at all costs rather than growing the green economy. There is still a huge missed opportunity to skill up the workforce to take jobs in the green economy from renewable technology and retrofit to nature restoration. In addition, local authorities remain under-resourced and underskilled to deliver on local climate and nature ambitions.

### **Retrofitting homes and buildings**

This is now more urgent due to the energy crisis. Local authorities have drawn on existing schemes such as the Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LADS) and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to cut emissions and tackle fuel poverty. But in the main, funding is insufficient and too fragmented when what is needed is street by street retrofit across tenures and delivered by local authorities. Owner occupiers are the largest sector of owners and aside from EPCs there is little regulatory incentive or grant support for able-to-pay homeowners. The private rented sector has the highest rates of fuel poverty so the commitment to bring properties up to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C rating by 2028 is welcome but needs to be written into regulations and backed by resourcing for local authorities to enforce it. There is still a major skills gap for fitting heat pumps and insulation, and although some progress has been made via Green Skills bootcamps, big shortages in trained workforce remain.

### **Decarbonising transport**

Delays to key guidance such as decarbonising Local Transport Plans and the Rural Transport Strategy are unhelpful. Enhanced Partnerships that give local authorities a greater role in improving bus services are welcome, but funding is too short term and inadequate with most local authorities missing out on recent funding to improve local services. Some progress has been made in boosting walking and cycling, particularly with the advent of Active Travel England, but there remains a need to target funding where it is needed most.

### **Planning to deliver zero carbon development that protects and enhances nature**

Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework in 2021 were a missed opportunity to strengthen the alignment of planning policies and decisions with climate targets. Proposed changes to planning, now set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and the Growth Plan (including proposals for new Investment Zones with 'streamlined' planning rules), do nothing to improve alignment with climate targets. Instead, there is an emphasis on deregulation, including removing important protection for nature sites and threats to undermine local policy making. The Future Homes Standard makes some progress on energy efficiency but needs strengthening and recent indications that planning barriers to onshore wind will be removed are lacking detail.

### **Reducing waste and encouraging sustainable consumption**

Some single-use plastic items have been restricted by legislation but progress to address this nationally remains slow. Extended Producer Responsibility legislation is also moving slowly. As a result, there is still a high cost burden on local authorities. There has been no further help to local authorities wishing to restrict frequency of waste collection to encourage reduction and recycling. There is continued reticence from central government to show any leadership to encourage sustainable, healthy diets.

### **Restoring nature for all**

Commitment was made to Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) in the 2021 Environment Act with local authorities set to play a key role, but there have been delays to guidance and still a lack of clarity on resourcing to councils - although Defra's own research shows the need to increase capacity and expertise to take on new work on LNRS and biodiversity net gain. For LNRS to work, local authorities will also need to be backed by strong planning policies for nature protection, incentives to farmers for nature friendly farming practices and no removal of existing environmental regulations (threatened in the government's Growth Plan).

The analysis of government support is mixed but overall shows insufficient progress in key areas. Meanwhile local authorities, working with their communities and businesses, continue to act within their existing powers and resources. From retrofitting social housing to doubling tree cover, there are [many inspiring examples](#) of councils acting to cut emissions and create healthier places for their residents. Blueprint partners are doing their best to support local authorities with toolkits, best practice, training and advice. But to reach the UK's legally binding target for net zero by 2050, every council will need to scale up action - and for that they need coordinated leadership, support and resource from government. The worrying implication from our analysis is that local authorities are not going to be able to play their full part in cutting emissions and restoring nature unless the government ramps up its support to them.

### **Developing local authority funding, governance and accounting systems that are fit for purpose**

It makes sense to give local authorities powers to raise their own funds (e.g. via payroll levies) but there is little progress on this. There is a lack of detail on decarbonisation targets and trajectories in key strategies and still a lack of standardisation and guidance on measuring and reporting emissions - without this councils may rely on costly consultancy. There is welcome progress in aligning procurement rules with environmental goals but this is not yet finalised.

# Theme 1 - Growing the zero and low carbon economy

Progress status: 

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Align strategy with the net zero climate goal</b>		
<p><b>1</b> Map areas across the UK at particular risk of business closures and jobs losses in the transition to net zero and develop targeted support to enable a fair transition for these areas to avoid the risk of left-behind communities.</p>	<p>The government’s approach to devolution has not been strategic or evidence based. The devolution deals agreed prior to 2021 include very little in respect of any environment and sustainability powers and funding. There is now a far greater opportunity for innovative thinking around these issues. Of the two agreed County Deals, both include agreement for government to work with them on a delivery plan for decarbonisation, including skills.</p> <p>The government’s Growth Plan 2022 introduced the policy of Investment Zones. Investment Zones aim to drive growth and unlock housing and will benefit from tax incentives, planning liberalisation, and wider support for the local economy. The significant risk is this is growth at any cost rather than sustainable, regenerative growth and could override local policies.</p> <p>Conservative MP Chris Skidmore is leading a <a href="#">review of net zero</a>, to find the most efficient and fastest ways to reach the climate target with an emphasis on “clean economic growth”.</p>	<p><a href="#">York and North Yorkshire devo deal</a> includes the following. Working with the BEIS Local Net Zero Hub and building on York and North Yorkshire’s extensive net zero strategic work to date, the government will engage with the area through regular dialogue with a single point of entry and reflecting emerging funding and policy opportunities.</p> <p>The government will provide £7 million investment that will enable the area of York and North Yorkshire to drive green economic growth towards their ambitions to be a carbon negative region. This investment is subject to agreement of a business case from the area.</p> <p>The government will also explore the opportunities and feasibility of investing to pilot an innovative approach to funding smaller scale feasibility studies in a predominantly rural area, creating a recyclable investment model.</p>

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Provide resources to grow the zero and low carbon economy</b>		
<p>2 Ensure that the Shared Prosperity Fund is designed to support zero and low carbon economic development, and that it includes provision for place-based funding, linked to local industrial strategies, that enables local authorities to create a joined-up response to the climate and ecological emergencies.</p>	<p>In the new Shared Prosperity Fund 2022, bids should 'take account' of net zero but a contribution to net zero is not required or identified as a key investment priority. This is likely to result in missed opportunities to align measures to boost local economies, skills and jobs with net zero targets.</p>	
<p>3 Enable flexibility in the business rates system, so that councils can support local decarbonisation and the installation of renewable energy generation measures on business premises.</p>	<p>Flexibility on business rates is a tax lever the government is proposing to implement. However it is focused on growth at all cost rather than sustainable, green growth.</p>	<p>Government Growth Plan 2022 states - specified sites in England will benefit from a range of time-limited tax incentives over 10 years. The tax incentives under consideration are as follows. Business rates - 100% relief from business rates on newly occupied business premises, and certain existing businesses where they expand in English Investment Zone tax sites. Councils hosting Investment Zones will receive 100% of the business rates growth in designated sites above an agreed baseline for 25 years.</p>
<p>4 Support the rapid development of digital infrastructure, including funding for local authorities to roll out digital solutions that can support local business resilience, for example by reducing unnecessary commuting or business travel and enabling the adoption of effective digital communications, particularly in rural areas and amongst more deprived communities.</p>	<p>There are promises in the Levelling Up White Paper to improve broadband and 4G coverage, but there are no clear details on how this will be delivered.</p> <p>The government says it is delivering via the Shared Rural Network and Project Gigabit but it is early days, with the first contract under Project Gigabit only awarded in August 2022 in South West England.</p> <p>The government's recently launched Growth Plan reiterates that it will further support digital rollout but there is still no detail with only a promise to publish plans later.</p>	

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Catalyse low carbon skills development</b>		
<p><b>5</b> Ensure local authorities have adequate skilled staff and access to training for elected members to catalyse local zero and low carbon economic development, including connected functions such as planning and development, transport, housing retrofits, sustainable consumption, public realm and green infrastructure.</p>	<p>A large enough and sufficiently skilled workforce continues to elude local authorities for a variety of reasons. The majority of sustainability roles that local authorities are hoping to undertake are non statutory and therefore unfunded. The Environment Act 2021 should bring forward secondary legislation that should include new burdens funding for green infrastructure roles to implement biodiversity net gain and local nature recovery strategies. Help with resourcing has been promised but no details are available yet (see nature section).</p>	<p>Staff shortages across the economy will not be addressed until central government ends its reliance on top-down national programmes and initiatives, according to the EDSK think tank. Its '<a href="#">Changing course(s)</a>' report proposes that at least £1.1 billion a year is given to devolved areas of England and local communities to help them tackle skills shortages and drive economic growth. In an LGA response, we said employment support should also be devolved to local leaders to get the best value for money from the billions currently spent by the government on various national schemes.</p>
<p><b>6</b> Enable councils to use existing funding to accelerate low carbon skills development by joining up the National Skills Fund, the National Retraining Scheme and the Apprenticeship Levy at local level and align this with place-based employment and business support systems.</p>	<p>The Green Jobs Taskforce published <a href="#">its review into the sector</a> in July 2021.</p> <p>In May 2022 the government established the <a href="#">Green Jobs Delivery Group</a>. There is only one local government representative on that group however.</p>	<p>The Midlands Net Zero Hub, in partnership with BEIS, have launched a <a href="#">£9.2million fund to support training in retrofit skills and energy efficiency</a>. The fund is open to training providers and is a competitive bidding process.</p>

## Theme 2 - Retrofitting homes and buildings

Progress status:



Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Align strategy and financing with the net zero climate goal</b>		
<p><b>1</b> Put in place a long-term, area-based delivery approach to retrofitting, with local authorities playing a core role in cutting emissions, tackling fuel poverty, creating demand, and growing local supply chains.</p>	<p>Made more urgent by the energy crisis.</p> <p>Inadequate, fragmented and competitive funding remains a barrier to area-based or street by street multi tenure delivery of retrofitting.</p> <p>The York and North Yorkshire Devolution Deal will include a focus on retrofitting including looking at how funds can be simplified and consolidated. This is welcome but needs to happen in all areas.</p>	<p>The <a href="#">Regen report</a> shows that government funding schemes are not reaching the areas with highest fuel poverty.</p>
<p><b>2</b> Provide local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships with the resources and support to produce and deliver local area energy plans (LAEP), which can underpin an area-based, low carbon home heating transformation programme in line with statutory national carbon budgets. This should be aligned with local plans and support councils to invest in low carbon infrastructure.</p>	<p>Support is still not sufficient - hence only 18 local authorities have so far completed a LAEP, with only a dozen more in progress according to Energy Systems Catapult, which supports local authorities to produce LAEPs. There is no obligation on Distribution Network Operators to work with local authorities on a LAEP.</p>	<p>From ES Catapult report:</p> <p>“LAEP delivers the desired coordinated approach to planning for net zero in local areas however there are several blockers to roll out across the country, one of which is funding. Local authorities do not typically have resources - people and money - to undertake producing LAEPs and delivering the actions that they identify.”</p> <p><a href="https://es.catapult.org.uk/report/the-future-of-local-area-energy-planning-in-the-uk/">https://es.catapult.org.uk/report/the-future-of-local-area-energy-planning-in-the-uk/</a></p>

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Align strategy and financing with the net zero climate goal</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>3 Ensure skills funding is directed towards creating a workforce that can deliver the necessary building retrofits (energy efficiency and low carbon heating) and give the public confidence about the quality of retrofitting work.</p>	<p>There is some progress on Department for Education funded green skills bootcamps but training still needs to be ramped up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 3000 trained heat pump installers but 27,000 will be needed in the next 6 years.</li> <li>• Less than 2000 retrofit co-ordinators have been trained and are fully qualified out of the 36,000 needed.</li> </ul> <p>Delivery timescales of government-funded programmes do not allow for training, councils report shortage of installation firms for government-funded work, leading to some handing back government funding.</p> <p>Recommendations for further government action to support local authorities in retrofit skills development <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<p>Nesta report - shortage of trained heat pump installers.</p> <p><a href="https://www.nesta.org.uk/press-release/shortage-of-trained-heat-pump-installers-could-set-back-net-zero/#:~:text=The%20report%2C%20published%20today%20by,of%204%2C000%2D6%2C000%20per%20year.">https://www.nesta.org.uk/press-release/shortage-of-trained-heat-pump-installers-could-set-back-net-zero/#:~:text=The%20report%2C%20published%20today%20by,of%204%2C000%2D6%2C000%20per%20year.</a></p> <p>(Retrofit Academy, March 2022).</p> <p><a href="https://retrofitacademy.org/the-retrofit-academy-awards-2022-rcoty/">https://retrofitacademy.org/the-retrofit-academy-awards-2022-rcoty/</a></p>

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Align strategy and financing with the net zero climate goal</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>4 Confirm the funding for retrofit and low carbon heat already pledged in the 2019 Conservative manifesto. Outline how and when the government will bring forward further funding to deliver retrofitting as a national infrastructure priority, recognising that many experts have called for significantly greater levels of support and for greater certainty around funding streams that would allow the development of stable supply chains.</p>	<p>The Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme has enabled some local authorities to target low income households with insulation and low carbon heating but this needs to be scaled up.</p> <p>There remains a £1.4bn funding gap between the 2019 manifesto commitment of £2.5bn to the Home Upgrade Scheme and funds committed so far.</p> <p>The 2019 manifesto committed £3.8bn for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund until 2030, but only £1bn has been committed to date.</p> <p>Increased labour and materials cost will result in fewer homes being retrofitted - more funding must be allocated by the government.</p> <p>There has been no funding announced to support non-fuel-poor households to retrofit.</p>	<p>North East Derbyshire council used LAD funding.</p> <p><a href="https://takeclimateaction.uk/climate-action/how-north-east-derbyshire-upgraded-council-homes-and-tackled-fuel-poverty">https://takeclimateaction.uk/climate-action/how-north-east-derbyshire-upgraded-council-homes-and-tackled-fuel-poverty</a></p> <p>EEIG Spring Statement briefing 2022.</p> <p><a href="https://www.theeeig.co.uk/media/1125/eeig_the-energy-efficiency-investment-imperative-02_22.pdf">https://www.theeeig.co.uk/media/1125/eeig_the-energy-efficiency-investment-imperative-02_22.pdf</a></p>
<p>5 Support access to funding, including simplifying the application process for schools and other public sector organisations. Engage with stakeholders including local authorities to make sure the process works.</p> <p>Provide flexibility to blend different funding streams.</p>	<p>Funding is not going to local authorities with the highest deprivation/fuel poverty needs.</p> <p>There was a commitment to simplifying funding streams in the Levelling Up White Paper but there is no detail on how this will happen across every government department and to what timescale.</p>	<p><a href="#">Regen report</a> showing that government funding schemes are not reaching areas with the highest fuel poverty.</p>

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Align strategy and financing with the net zero climate goal</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>6 Reduce VAT rates on domestic energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating, provided the whole property is brought above certain EPC thresholds to support the retrofitting industry to develop.</p>	<p>VAT exemptions introduced in March 2022 are welcome, though not all measures such as double glazing are included.</p>	
<b>Enable public sector retrofitting</b>		
<p>7 Put in place a holistic package of resourcing that enables local authorities and other registered providers to bring all public sector buildings, including as a priority social housing, up to a minimum of EPC 'C' by 2030. This should be done through whole-house retrofits, with immediate short-term focus on reducing fuel poverty rates.</p>	<p>Funds are being provided through the public sector decarbonisation scheme (£2.5bn up to 2025) and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (£1bn) but this is a small fraction of what is needed.</p>	<p>According to analysis by Unison, "The current government has only committed £8.2 billion towards the identified public services decarbonisation measures, only 7% of what is needed. There is therefore a public investment gap of £113 billion between now and 2035".</p> <p><a href="https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2021/11/26609.pdf">https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2021/11/26609.pdf</a></p>
<p>8 Confirm the £2.9 billion over the next five years pledged in the 2019 Conservative manifesto for improving energy efficiency in schools and hospitals, together with the investment and support for all schools to reach zero carbon by 2030, acknowledging the unique role played by schools in inspiring behaviour change in local communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools still lack suitable funding to help retrofit to be zero carbon by 2030.</li> <li>• The DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (April 2022) was a good start but lacks funding and urgency for a full retrofit programme.</li> <li>• Ashden's Let's Go Zero programme are working with DfE and other key stakeholders to enable schools to access funding and support to reach zero carbon by 2030.</li> </ul>	

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Support private rented sector retrofitting</b>		
<p>9 Introduce the proposed regulations on the energy performance of private rented homes so that these homes are EPC 'C' by 2028, with a cost cap on landlords of £15,000 to drive greater carbon emissions reductions across a larger number of homes and deeper energy bill reductions for tenants than the currently proposed £10,000 cap.</p>	<p>There is now a commitment to require private rented properties to be EPC 'C' by 2028.</p> <p>But neither the Levelling Up White Paper nor the social housing regulations bill provided clarity on when the new energy efficiency standards will be introduced.</p> <p>It is essential to ensure that local authorities have the capacity to properly enforce these standards. The private rented sector has the highest levels of fuel poverty and lowest ability to respond (e.g. mortgage payers can negotiate with lenders and invest in energy efficiency but tenants can't).</p>	
<p>10 Ensure councils have sufficient resources for ensuring compliance with the regulations on private rented homes.</p>	<p>A toolkit to help local authorities enforce the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard has been developed but not published or publicised by BEIS.</p> <p>Exemptions to existing rules mean that many landlords are not improving homes.</p> <p>There is no follow-up funding following BEIS pilots, which leaves councils under-resourced to undertake enforcement activities.</p>	

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Support private owned sector retrofitting</b>		
<p>11 Establish financial support and incentives for councils to encourage private retrofitting, including green mortgages, a fiscally neutral, variable Stamp Duty Land Tax for more efficient homes, a revolving loan fund and/or low-cost finance for home energy retrofitting.</p>	<p>There remains no financial support or incentives for private non-fuel-poor retrofitting, although the government has announced £450m for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme to support heat pump installation.</p> <p>In the September 2022 fiscal statement, the government missed the opportunity to link stamp duty reductions to energy efficiency improvements.</p> <p>There is some work emerging at the local level - eg. <a href="#">GMCA are partnering with the Green Finance Institute</a> to launch innovative financial products for householders to fund retrofit but there is scope to reduce interest rates to make these products more attractive.</p>	
<p>12 Reform the planning system and building regulations to enable local authorities to require the installation of energy efficiency measures when owners are making changes to a property that requires permission from their council, and ensure there is adequate funding for building control officers to enforce this.</p>	<p>There are still missed opportunities to improve energy efficiency including when the use of a building changes.</p> <p>Many local authorities have had to cut building control staff or have outsourced the service.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/insight/the-disappearing-act-cuts-to-building-control-professionals-and-what-they-mean-for-building-safety">https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/insight/the-disappearing-act-cuts-to-building-control-professionals-and-what-they-mean-for-building-safety</a></p>
<p>13 Revise the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to encourage the installation of energy efficiency measures in non-listed buildings in conservation areas.</p> <p>Provide funding, professional advice and technical support to enable sympathetic retrofitting to listed buildings.</p>	<p>No change to NPPF when it was updated in 2021.</p> <p>Some local authorities are proactively developing policies for sensitive retrofit of historic buildings.</p> <p>General guidance on retrofitting listed buildings is provided by Historic England.</p>	

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Support private owned sector retrofitting</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p><b>14</b> Reform the planning system so that external wall insulation with non-combustible materials is permitted development in all cases, except for conservation areas and listed buildings.</p>	<p>No change - planning permission may still be needed if insulation changes the external appearance.</p>	
<p><b>15</b> Support local information hubs to link available retrofit solutions, installers, finance solutions and access to data on impacts of previous retrofits - reviewed and updated regularly to serve local need.</p>	<p>A few councils have applied for levelling up funds such as the Community Renewal Fund to support this work, but funding is inadequate. There is a shortage of retrofit advisors and co-ordinators to serve local need.</p> <p>A standardised building renovation passport would reduce the need to reinvent the wheel by local government.</p>	

## Theme 3 - Decarbonising transport

Progress status:   

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Improve public transport, cycling and walking</b>		
<p><b>1</b> Introduce higher subsidy levels for public transport, recognising the significant and ongoing strain these systems are facing due to Covid-19, and simplify and reduce public transport fares, with increased national and local control. This will also benefit poorer households, who are disproportionately reliant on the bus network for their travel needs.</p>	<p>During the pandemic, bus passenger numbers declined significantly, along with other public transport users. Figures show usage remains below pre-pandemic levels. The government provided emergency funding to commercial bus operators during the pandemic. In August, the government announced an extension to the Bus Recovery Grant for a final six months, from October 2022 to the end of March 2023.</p> <p>However funding needs to be put into improving bus services, not just emergency measures. It should deliver on the commitments made in the National Bus Strategy. These include providing the £3 billion over three years for Bus Service Improvement Plans which have been produced by every local transport authority and local bus operators. So far, the government has only delivered £1.1 billion of this, with more than half of council bids yet to receive funding.</p> <p>In response to the cost of living crisis, in September 2022 the government announced it would be providing £60m to help bus operators to cap single adult fares at £2 per journey. However, the funding is for January to March 2023 only.</p> <p>This initiative follows the announcement in April 2022 of funding for 31 Bus Service Improvement Plans (a key element of the National Bus Strategy). However, 79 local transport authorities in total bid for an estimated £10bn of funding, considerably more than the £1bn available.</p> <p>However, the government has made it clear that if concessionary patronage does not increase and the funding spent on local bus services declines, local authorities should expect their core funding to decrease.</p>	<p>The use of bus services outside London is currently 70% to 80% of pre-COVID 19 levels.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/use-of-transport-modes-great-britain-since-1-march-2020">Use of transport modes: Great Britain, since 1 March 2020 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>.</p> <p>In some areas patronage levels for concessionary passengers remain lower than for fare-paying passengers.</p> <p><a href="https://cbwmagazine.com/local-authorities-win-and-lose-in-bsip-funding-announcements/">https://cbwmagazine.com/local-authorities-win-and-lose-in-bsip-funding-announcements/</a></p>

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Improve public transport, cycling and walking</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>2 Update Local Transport Plan guidance to prioritise low carbon transport modes, including public transport, active travel and emerging new modes of transport.</p>	<p>New LTP guidance was promised for autumn 2022, to include a requirement for transport decarbonisation, with technical guidance on how to reduce quantifiable carbon also promised. A transport decarbonisation toolkit with case studies was published in April 2022 but the LTP guidance and technical guidance are still not available.</p> <p>The Bus Back Better Strategy (2021) required every local transport authority to publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Each plan will need to be updated annually and reflected in the Local Transport Plan, along with other relevant local plans such as Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.</p>	
<p>3 Introduce a salary sacrifice scheme for employees to claim up to a maximum amount each month, tax free, to spend on their mobility needs via public transport, bike and other micro-mobility options (eg e-scooters), and car sharing where these modes are not available. Encourage employers to contribute to the costs where their employees commute by public transport as part of the scheme.</p>	<p>The Cycle to Work Scheme already allows employees to purchase a bike without making an upfront payment and instead paying for it through tax efficient monthly instalments to their employer. This has the potential to save the employee between 26% and 40% on the cost of a bike and accessories.</p> <p>Other salary sacrifice schemes are also available for season ticket purchases and e-bikes and e-scooter. However they do not offer the same level of savings as the Cycle to Work Scheme.</p>	

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Improve public transport, cycling and walking</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>4 Fund local authorities to significantly increase cycling, walking and micro-mobility provision by establishing a dedicated funding stream at levels seen in countries like the Netherlands and extending the ease of reallocating road space to pedestrians and cyclists as is happening in Milan and London.</p> <p>Give local authorities the powers to licence dockless micro-mobility operators, set safety standards, and cap the number of vehicles deployed in local areas.</p>	<p>Long-term, stable funding, along with facilitated behavioural change, is needed to facilitate the increase in active travel to meet the 2050 net zero carbon target.</p> <p>Some progress has been made - the government announced £161m funding for walking and cycling projects in April 2022. Active Travel England will oversee 134 projects across 46 local authorities (outside London). There will be a final third tranche of funding (date tbc).</p> <p>Levelling Up Fund 2 (which includes local transport) should also be used for active travel, prioritising places that are most in need due to unsafe and under-served walking and cycling infrastructure.</p> <p>Local authority trials of e-scooters until November 2022.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators</a></p>
<p>5 Invest in electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and digital connectivity to facilitate and encourage more permanent flexible work practices.</p>	<p>The government published its Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy in March 2022, which plans to ensure at least 300,000 public charging points by 2030 (a ten-fold increase).</p> <p>The government announced the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme in August 2022. The funding is expected to deliver over 1,000 public charge points across the pilot local authority areas. Significant and timely further investment is required.</p> <p>The Transport Bill will support the rollout of EV charge points along with a new low-speed, zero emission vehicle (LZEV) category (which will include e-scooters) and establish a new regime for regulating micro-mobility, including powers for local transport authorities to shape and manage rental operations.</p>	<p>As of September 2022, there were 35,000 public charging stations at 19,000 locations.</p> <p><a href="#">How many electric charging points in the UK 2022 - Zap-Map.</a></p>

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Improve public transport, cycling and walking</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>6 Devolve powers to enable local authorities to transform the standard of public transport provision in their area, including TfL-style coordinated public transport management, Oyster-type ticketing arrangements and control of local railway lines where appropriate.</p>	<p>Under the Bus Back Better Strategy (2021), funding has become linked to a requirement for local transport authorities to establish Enhanced Partnerships, with delivery from April 2022. This is a statutory arrangement under the 2017 Bus Services Act which can specify, for example, timetables and multi-operator ticketing.</p> <p>The Levelling Up White Paper reiterates commitments to more integrated services via Regional Sustainable Transport Settlements which are welcome in Mayoral Combined Authorities, but similar levels of coordination will still be lacking in other areas.</p>	
<p>7 Enable local authorities to implement bus service regulation, including devolution of bus service operators' grant to local authorities so it can be targeted at low carbon vehicles.</p>	<p>The government's Bus Back Better Strategy (2021) requires all local transport authorities to establish Enhanced Partnerships.</p> <p>An Enhanced Partnership is a statutory arrangement under the 2017 Bus Services Act which can specify, for example, timetables and multi-operator ticketing, and allows the LTA to take over the role of registering bus services from the Traffic Commissioners. The main difference versus franchising is that operators in an Enhanced Partnership have a much greater role, working with LTAs to both develop and deliver improvements for passengers and having a real say on how bus services should be improved. Enhanced Partnerships also offer significantly more flexibility than franchising.</p>	
<p>8 Provide funding, resources and new regulatory powers to local authorities for Mobility as a Service (MaaS) schemes, particularly for rural local authorities.</p>	<p>In September 2021, the government published a summary of responses to its call for evidence on the future of rural transport. The proposed Future of Transport: Rural Strategy is still awaited.</p>	

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Improve public transport, cycling and walking</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>9 Work with local authorities on influencing behaviours to both reduce and shift travel to more sustainable modes.</p>	<p>In September 2022, the government announced it would be providing £60m to help bus operators to cap single adult fares at £2 per journey. Whilst the primary purpose is to help with the cost of living crisis, an intended secondary outcome is 'nudging' people out of their cars and onto the bus.</p> <p>However, the funding is for January to March 2023 only. A strategic and long-term strategy to influence behaviours (including shifting perceptions) is required, underpinned by the provision of viable public transport alternatives.</p>	

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Manage traffic and reduce air pollution</b>		
<p>10 Give local authorities more control of roads in their areas, including road traffic offences, for purposes of traffic management and reduction of carbon emissions (not including motorways).</p>	<p>The Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Representations &amp; Appeals) (England) Regulations 2022 became law on 31st May 2022. Local authorities are now able to apply for designated powers to enforce against moving traffic offences. London has had these powers for some time.</p>	
<p>11 Building on the improvements in air quality arising from coronavirus, fund an air quality support scheme for local authorities in the context of the national commitment to compliance with WHO standards on PM2.5 from 2022. Ensure any new modelling for dealing with air quality is adequately resourced and allow local authorities the power to take local action on meeting emissions targets.</p>	<p>Four cities now have Clean Air Zones: Bath, Birmingham, Bradford, Portsmouth. Bristol, Sheffield and Tyneside will follow shortly. Greater Manchester is reviewing its CAZ proposals.</p> <p>In July, the government announced a £7m funding pot for local authorities to find innovative ways to improve the air quality in their areas. However, annual, competitive and limited funding rounds do not support local councils in their ambitions to tackle air quality issues.</p> <p>In August 2022, the government published a package of measures which give local authorities a new strengthened framework to improve air quality.</p> <p>Whilst broadly supportive of the clarifications and enhancements, there are no new resources to support the requirements and recommendations. More crucially, having been consulted by Defra's review team, the emphasis of the strategy continues to be on the role of LAs in managing local air quality, whereas LAs have relatively minor powers and opportunities to tackle at source the primary causal factors, including vehicle emission standards, agriculture and domestic heating emissions.</p> <p>In line with requirements of the Environment Act (2021), the revised National Air Quality Strategy will be published in 2023. A key focus for this strategy is improving local authority capability to target action to reduce health disparities from air pollution and its disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>The NAO published its report 'Tackling local breaches of air quality' in June 2022. This concludes that existing policy measures will not be sufficient to achieve most of the government's 2030 emissions ceilings and the government is developing further plans.</p> <p>Friends of the Earth has published a map of air pollution hotspots showing that poorer communities and people of colour are disproportionately exposed to high levels of air pollution despite having lower car ownership.</p> <p><a href="http://www.friendsoftheearth.uk/sustainable-living">www.friendsoftheearth.uk/sustainable-living</a></p> <p>Research by Imperial College London has concluded that the government has not done enough to align air quality and climate targets.</p> <p><a href="http://www.cleanairfund.org/news-item">www.cleanairfund.org/news-item</a></p> <p>The Mayor of London has been highly critical of delays to meeting air quality targets citing the serious health impacts on the health of Londoners.</p> <p><a href="http://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases">www.london.gov.uk/press-releases</a></p>

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Manage aviation</b>		
<p>12 Ensure local government has the necessary powers and influence to manage and mitigate impacts from surface access to airports - such as air quality and congestion - as part of a wider UK aviation strategy that should prioritise surface transport and reduce aviation emissions in line with statutory national carbon budgets.</p>	<p>In May 2022 the government published <a href="#">Flightpath to the future</a> - a strategic framework for the future of aviation focusing on the next 10 years. This makes no reference to the role of local authorities and includes growth in capacity at UK airports.</p> <p>This is despite the CCC's policy recommendation for "no net expansion of UK airport capacity unless the sector is on track to sufficiently outperform its net emissions trajectory and can accommodate the additional demand".</p> <p>The Jet Zero Strategy is due for publication later this year, and will set out the government's plan for the sector to reach net zero aviation by 2050.</p>	

## Theme 4 - Planning to deliver zero carbon development that protects and enhances nature

Progress status: 

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Align strategy with its net zero climate goal</b>		
<p><b>1</b> Revise proposals in the Planning White Paper and update the NPPF to empower local authorities to adopt planning policies commensurate with the climate and ecological emergency, informed by evidence, opportunities and the needs that exist in their areas and in consultation with their communities.</p>	<p>Current proposed changes to the planning system set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill do not do anything to improve alignment of all policies and decisions with net zero.</p> <p>Changes to the NPPF in 2021 did improve the definition of sustainable development to include climate adaptation and mitigation but there needs to be a stronger emphasis on climate throughout the NPPF.</p> <p>New proposals in the Growth Plan to “streamline” and “liberalise” planning regulations could undermine strong climate and nature policies in Local Plans as well as communities’ ability to participate. Existing environmental protections could be removed in Investment Zones and the delivery of high carbon infrastructure - mainly roads - speeded up.</p>	<p>Recent decision by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) to remove key net zero requirements in West Oxfordshire’s Area Action Plan is indicative of the problem.</p>

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Deliver low and zero carbon development</b>		
<p>2 Reform the planning system to ensure that it, in conjunction with necessary changes to building regulations, will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• require all new homes and other buildings to be zero carbon as soon as possible and at latest by 2025, including a requirement for on-site renewable energy generation;</li> <li>• work to a policy hierarchy which incorporates circular economy principles for construction, including in relation to reuse and refurbishment in preference to demolition and new construction;</li> <li>• ensure that local authorities continue to be able to set higher requirements for energy efficiency than national standards where practical and demonstrably viable;</li> <li>• restrict permitted development rights to minor development so that local authorities can ensure new housing meets energy efficiency and healthy living standards;</li> <li>• require any new homes that are delivered using permitted development rights to change existing use to residential use to meet high energy efficiency standards;</li> <li>• enable local authorities to require water reuse and recycling in areas of severe water stress and to set tighter limits than the current 110 litres/person/day limit; and</li> <li>• give stronger encouragement for retaining and expanding local food growing, processing and retailing.</li> </ul>	<p>Current proposals in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB) do not go far enough and in fact could threaten local authorities ability to introduce strong policies on net zero e.g. if National Development Management Plans can override Local Plans.</p> <p>The Future Homes Standard has been improved but the new standard will not be introduced until 2025. This is already delaying action so it is vital that there are no further delays to this timescale. The new standard needs to be strengthened further to ensure genuinely net zero homes including embodied carbon.</p> <p>Circular economy principles are not included.</p> <p>Local authorities are able to set higher standards for energy efficiency before higher national standards are introduced but this must not then be challenged by PINS. Higher standards could be undermined in proposed Investment Zones which will “benefit from” streamlined planning rules.</p> <p>Permitted development rights have been extended giving local authorities less control over quality standards for homes including energy efficiency.</p> <p>Wales and Scotland have introduced more stringent standards for reuse and recycling of water than England e.g. in Wales 110.</p>	<p>Some local authorities are carrying out comprehensive climate emergency reviews of their Local Plans. It remains to be seen whether these are approved, and whether changes introduced in the future as a result of the LURB may threaten strong local policies.</p> <p>Recent decision by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) to remove key net zero requirements in West Oxfordshire’s Area Action Plan is indicative of the problem that already exists.</p> <p><a href="https://tcpa.org.uk/pins-assault-on-an-exemplary-net-zero-planning-policy/">https://tcpa.org.uk/pins-assault-on-an-exemplary-net-zero-planning-policy/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.labc.co.uk/news/how-get-it-right-domestic-water-usage-new-dwellings#:~:text=Welsh%20regulations,conversion%20of%20an%20existing%20building.">https://www.labc.co.uk/news/how-get-it-right-domestic-water-usage-new-dwellings#:~:text=Welsh%20regulations,conversion%20of%20an%20existing%20building.</a></p>

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Deliver low and zero carbon development</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p><b>3</b> Provide stronger guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• achieving zero carbon at every stage of the design of a development, from building siting to construction materials; and</li> <li>• retrofitting heritage assets and buildings in conservation areas to support climate goals.</li> </ul>	<p>The new National Design Code has missed an opportunity to provide design guidance on low and net zero carbon development.</p> <p>Historic England provides some general guidance on retrofitting heritage buildings.</p>	
<p><b>4</b> Reform the methodology for calculating housing supply and delivering new homes so this focuses on genuine need, identified locally, particularly the need for affordable homes, and enables local authorities to prioritise sustainable locations with an emphasis on the proximity to employment, food shops, and walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure.</p>	<p>The LURB maintains an emphasis on housing numbers. It does reference the need to maintain provision of affordable housing via new Infrastructure Levy but it is unclear whether there will be an affordable housing target. DLUHC has suggested removing the requirement for authorities to maintain a rolling five-year supply of deliverable land for housing, where their plan is up to date, and housing targets could be scrapped. It is not clear what this means for affordable housing.</p> <p>The implications of fast tracking for housing in Investment Zones on the delivery of affordable housing is not yet clear but concerns are being raised that planning 'liberalisation' may mean that developers don't have to provide as much affordable housing or that housing may be of low quality.</p> <p>NPPF was updated in July 2021 but is not strong enough on sustainable location. (Requires choice of transport modes without sufficient emphasis on active travel and public transport.)</p>	<p>Too much new housing is still car dependent.</p> <p><a href="https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/the-project/building-car-dependency/">https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/the-project/building-car-dependency/</a></p>

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Develop renewable energy</b>		
<p><b>5</b> Take action to tackle the 'viability' issue when drawing up local plans to ensure outcomes are in line with the public interest, including tackling the climate and ecological emergency, and do not just benefit developers.</p>	<p>No progress on national guidance. Local authorities are carrying out their own viability assessments at their own expense to support stronger policies on net zero.</p>	<p>e.g. Reading.</p> <p><a href="https://takeclimateaction.uk/climate-action/how-reading-uses-planning-deliver-new-zero-carbon-homes">https://takeclimateaction.uk/climate-action/how-reading-uses-planning-deliver-new-zero-carbon-homes</a></p>
<p><b>6</b> Introduce stronger support in the NPPF for local plans to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase the provision of onshore wind power and other renewables, and infrastructure for power storage - including identifying new sites and requiring the installation of renewables within new developments - with specific encouragement for community ownership, and;</li> <li>• plan for renewable energy and storage with distribution network operators at a regional level, to meet anticipated demand from electric vehicles and heat pumps.</li> </ul>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) continues to restrict new onshore wind schemes. Recent announcements in the Growth Plan suggest that barriers to onshore wind development in the planning system will be removed but details have not yet been published.</p> <p>A few local authorities (e.g Lancaster) are developing policies for encouraging renewable energy storage and there is still a lack of national guidance.</p>	<p>Some councils are proactively setting out suitable areas for onshore wind in their local plans e.g. Stroud, Lancaster.</p> <p>However, most do not. A review of local authority policy documents revealed that overall, 89% of all local planning authorities in England do not have areas identified as suitable for wind energy development in their local plan or in an adopted neighbourhood plan (Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments, University of the West England).</p> <p><a href="https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/reports/lack-suitable-areas-onshore-wind-local-plans">https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/reports/lack-suitable-areas-onshore-wind-local-plans</a></p>
<p><b>7</b> Support appropriate development of renewable energy schemes within the green belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to facilitate renewables that do not conflict with the purposes of these areas.</p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) continues to restrict new onshore wind schemes with no clear guidance on how to allow appropriate development in these areas.</p>	<p>Some local authorities are leading the way and developing specific policies about acceptable small scale renewables in AONBs e.g. Stroud.</p>

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Enhance nature and green infrastructure</b>		
<p><b>8</b> Revise the NPPF to provide greater priority to protecting and enhancing the green spaces and infrastructure we need to support community resilience and climate adaptation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) empowering local authorities to set green infrastructure standards through local plans to deliver on both the climate and ecological emergency and to refuse development where these requirements are not met;</li> <li>b) providing stronger protection for all spaces that are important for nature, including priority habitats and non-statutory local wildlife sites;</li> <li>c) setting a requirement for local plans to consider how to provide better access to good quality, nature-rich, green space for everyone within five minutes' walk of their home, in line with the Natural England standard ANGSt (Access to Natural Green Space Standard); and</li> <li>d) providing a stronger reminder of the duty to preserve trees on development sites, to enable local enforcement.</li> </ul>	<p>NPPF updates 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Needs strengthening.</li> <li>b) Not strengthened in update to NPPF in 2021. Concerns that proposals in the Growth Plan will lead to loss of nature sites in Investment Zones.</li> <li>c) New reference to the importance of access to green space welcome but still too vague. Needs to be stronger to ensure access to high-quality, nature-rich space within walking distance.</li> <li>d) New paragraph 131 in the NPPF puts more emphasis on the importance of trees including opportunities to incorporate new trees in development and "that existing trees are retained wherever possible".</li> </ul>	<p>Some councils are proactively setting out suitable areas for onshore wind in their local plans e.g. Stroud, Lancaster.</p> <p>However, most do not. A review of local authority policy documents revealed that overall, 89% of all local planning authorities in England do not have areas identified as suitable for wind energy development in their local plan or in an adopted neighbourhood plan (Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments, University of the West England).</p> <p><a href="https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/reports/lack-suitable-areas-onshore-wind-local-plans">https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/reports/lack-suitable-areas-onshore-wind-local-plans</a></p>
<p><b>9</b> Ensure that plans to improve green infrastructure are adequately funded.</p>	<p>This remains a critical issue. For example, constrained highways maintenance budgets means local authorities are extremely reluctant to take on the management of trees and other green space within new developments.</p>	

# Theme 5 - Reducing waste and encouraging sustainable consumption

Progress status: ● ● ●

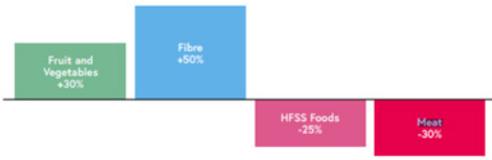
Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration																																													
<b>Reduce consumption of materials and resources</b>																																															
<p><b>1</b> Reduce the pressure on local authority systems by introducing legislation that restricts the availability of non-essential, single-use plastic items and all oxo-degradable products.</p>	<p>The supply (not manufacture) of single-use plastic straws, cotton buds and drink stirrers has been <a href="#">restricted</a> in England since July 2021.</p> <p>Earlier this year, a <a href="#">further consultation</a> took place on plans to ban the supply of single-use plastic plates, cutlery, balloon sticks or expanded polystyrene food and drink containers. We are awaiting the outcome / next steps.</p> <p>On oxo-degradable products, there appear to be no immediate plans to restrict availability. Government held a call for evidence in 2019 and said it was considering a ban “subject to further consultation” but this does not appear to have progressed further.</p> <p>Defra has also stated that EPR reforms (see below) would include a mandatory take-back scheme for the collection and recycling of disposable coffee cups by 2024, as well as a deposit return scheme (excl. glass).</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Plastic item</th> <th>Wales</th> <th>England</th> <th>Scotland</th> <th>Northern Ireland</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Drink stirrers</td> <td>Proposed ban</td> <td>Ban on supply</td> <td>Ban on manufacture and supply</td> <td>No proposals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cotton buds</td> <td>Proposed ban</td> <td>Ban on supply</td> <td>Ban on manufacture and supply</td> <td>No proposals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Straws</td> <td>Proposed ban</td> <td>Ban on supply</td> <td>Ban on supply</td> <td>No proposals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Single-use plates</td> <td>Proposed ban</td> <td>Proposed ban on supply</td> <td>Ban on manufacture and supply</td> <td>No proposals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Single-use cutlery</td> <td>Proposed ban</td> <td>Proposed ban on supply</td> <td>Ban on manufacture and supply</td> <td>No proposals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Balloon sticks</td> <td>Proposed ban</td> <td>Proposed ban on supply</td> <td>Ban on supply</td> <td>No proposals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expanded polystyrene containers e.g. takeaway food and drink containers</td> <td>Proposed ban</td> <td>Proposed ban on supply</td> <td>Ban on manufacture and supply</td> <td>No proposals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oxo-degradable products</td> <td>Proposed ban</td> <td>No proposals</td> <td>Proposed ban</td> <td>No proposals</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Plastic item	Wales	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Drink stirrers	Proposed ban	Ban on supply	Ban on manufacture and supply	No proposals	Cotton buds	Proposed ban	Ban on supply	Ban on manufacture and supply	No proposals	Straws	Proposed ban	Ban on supply	Ban on supply	No proposals	Single-use plates	Proposed ban	Proposed ban on supply	Ban on manufacture and supply	No proposals	Single-use cutlery	Proposed ban	Proposed ban on supply	Ban on manufacture and supply	No proposals	Balloon sticks	Proposed ban	Proposed ban on supply	Ban on supply	No proposals	Expanded polystyrene containers e.g. takeaway food and drink containers	Proposed ban	Proposed ban on supply	Ban on manufacture and supply	No proposals	Oxo-degradable products	Proposed ban	No proposals	Proposed ban	No proposals
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Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Support more efficient and better quality waste collections</b>		
<p>2 Put greater emphasis on reducing non-recyclable packaging, reducing the use of more difficult to recycle packaging and reducing the range of approved packaging materials, potentially through a granular modulated producer fees system.</p>	<p>The <a href="#">EPR waste reforms</a> include proposals to introduce modulated producer fees. Defra has said these will be designed to incentivise improvements to the recyclability of packaging, as well as allowing producers more control over the fees they pay and any related impacts on consumer prices.</p> <p>However modulated fees will not be introduced until 2025 as part of the wider delays and uncertainties around EPR (see 3 below).</p> <p>As part of their EPR response, the government also expressed an intention to complete the post-implementation review of the Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations, which started in 2021, and to develop measures to encourage the use of reusable / refillable packaging.</p>	

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Support more efficient and better quality waste collections</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>3 Implement Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation as an instrumental approach to managing product value chains across the board, to drive better design and longer life products, incorporating the full life cycle impacts of products. This should be fully funded by producers and ensure that local councils achieve full net cost recovery.</p>	<p>The latest <a href="#">Defra EPR consultation</a> response (published March 2022) delayed implementation to 2024 onwards.</p> <p>There is little indication yet of the impact the new government will have on EPR and other waste reforms (pace and direction of travel).</p> <p>Assuming the reforms do continue to progress, EPR will go a long way towards meeting this ask but with some gaps and concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Business waste</b> has been dropped from EPR, meaning producers will now be liable for an estimated £1.7bn of costs rather than the estimated £2.7bn which would cover the cost of both business and household recycling. This potentially undermines polluter pays / full life cycle approaches.</li> <li>• We have not yet seen details of how the intended <b>full net cost recovery</b> payments to local councils will actually be determined / calculated. A formula-based approach (which seems likely) could substantially shortchange some councils, particularly in built-up areas with challenging / diverse waste management and collection systems.</li> <li>• Local authority fees will cover household waste and on-street bins but <b>not litter</b>, meaning the scheme will not cover full costs in any case.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.mrw.co.uk/news/costs-to-producers-cut-by-1bn-as-business-waste-dropped-from-epr-28-03-2022/">https://www.mrw.co.uk/news/costs-to-producers-cut-by-1bn-as-business-waste-dropped-from-epr-28-03-2022/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/experts-highlight-key-points-in-epr-response/">https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/experts-highlight-key-points-in-epr-response/</a></p>

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Support more efficient and better quality waste collections</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>4 Fund the costs of high-quality recycling collections that are source separated where practicable.</p> <p>5 Fund the introduction of separate food waste collections from households and businesses.</p>	<p>These asks could be addressed by proposed reforms to consistency of collections, supported by funding raised through EPR.</p> <p>The last consultation on consistency in household and business recycling closed in July 2021, and did recognise the need to provide new burdens funding for additional costs (e.g. food waste recycling).</p> <p>The government stated an intention to respond in early 2022, but a response has not yet been published.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling-in-england">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling-in-england</a></p> <p><a href="https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling/">https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling/</a></p>
<p>6 Enable local authorities to restrict the frequency of residual waste collection as appropriate to local circumstances to achieve waste reduction and allow willing local authorities to trial the implementation of 'pay as you throw' schemes without penalising lower income households.</p>	<p>No positive progress.</p> <p>The last Defra consultation document on consistency highlighted that many local authorities now collect residual waste fortnightly, and a small number collect every three weeks. It suggested that the government may introduce a minimum service standard of alternate weekly collection for residual waste (alongside weekly food waste collection), which would represent a reduction in flexibility for local authorities.</p> <p>Not aware of any developments on policy frameworks / legality of 'pay as you throw'.</p>	
<p>7 Provide local authorities with enforcement powers to improve the quality of materials and ensure they are effectively captured and prepared for processing.</p>	<p>Not aware of any progress / positive developments in this space.</p>	

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Support more efficient and better quality waste collections</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>8 Create a single, consistent, comprehensive, and clear message on material that can/cannot be recycled with on-pack labelling. Accompany this with an extensive complementary communications campaign, underpinned by prior establishment of reliable, transparent and viable end markets for all materials.</p>	<p>Latest Defra statements on EPR stated that reforms would include mandatory labelling of packaging for recyclability with a single labelling format.</p> <p>There would also be a requirement for compostable and biodegradable packaging to have a "do not recycle label" until there is evidence that it can be collected and composted separately.</p> <p>No details yet on what sort of communications work and capacity-building of end-markets might accompany / support the reforms.</p>	

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Support sustainable consumption</b>		
<p>9 Issue practical guidance on the implementation of lower meat and dairy diets - in line with the Eatwell Guide - in school, hospital, prison and care home food standards.</p>	<p>In 2021, the government-commissioned, independent National Food Strategy highlighted a need to cut meat consumption by 30% within a decade for both climate and health reasons, and recommended allied actions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trialling a Community Eatwell Programme for people on low incomes to have more healthy, sustainable diets.</li> <li>• Supporting farmers to move to more sustainable land use.</li> <li>• Strengthening government procurement rules to ensure taxpayer money is spent on healthy, sustainable food.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the Committee on Climate Change has recommended that UK meat consumption should be reduced by 20% by 2020, and 35% by 2050. The Eating Better Alliance goes further than this calling for a 50% reduction by 2030.</p> <p>However, the government's response and subsequent food plan has not taken forward these recommendations, and has been <a href="#">heavily critiqued</a> by the Strategy's lead advisor.</p> <p>The current government seems even less inclined than the previous leadership to progress strategies around changing the nation's diet (as evidenced by moves to potentially scrap the anti-obesity strategy).</p>	<p>Changes needed to the national diet by 2032 (compared to 2019) to meet health, climate and nature commitments.</p>  <p><b>1. Escape the junk food cycle and protect the NHS</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 1</b> Introduce a Sugar and Salt Reformulation Tax. Use some of the revenue to help get fresh fruit and vegetables to low-income families.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 2</b> Introduce mandatory reporting for large food companies.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 3</b> Launch a new "Eat and Learn" initiative for schools.</p> <p><b>2. Reduce diet-related inequality</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 4</b> Extend eligibility for free school meals.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 5</b> Fund the Holiday Activities and Food programme for the next three years.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 6</b> Expand the Healthy Start scheme.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 7</b> Trial a "Community Eatwell" Programme, supporting those on low incomes to improve their diets.</p> <p><b>3. Make the best use of our land</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 8</b> Guarantee the budget for agricultural payments until at least 2029 to help farmers transition to more sustainable land use.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 9</b> Create a Rural Land Use Framework based on the three compartment model.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 10</b> Define minimum standards for trade, and a mechanism for protecting them.</p> <p><b>4. Create a long-term shift in our food culture</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 11</b> Invest £1 billion in innovation to create a better food system.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 12</b> Create a National Food System Data programme.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 13</b> Strengthen Government procurement rules to ensure that taxpayer money is spent on healthy and sustainable food.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 14</b> Set clear targets and bring in legislation for long-term change.</p>

## Theme 6 - Restoring nature for all

Progress status:



Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Enable a strategic response to the climate and ecological crisis</b>		
<p>1 Support local authorities to coordinate the development and delivery of integrated and strategic Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Local Natural Capital Plans.</p>	<p>A commitment to LNRS in Environment Act 2021, was followed by broad consultation on priorities, but no guidance has yet been issued. Local authorities are likely to lead the process as 'Responsible Authorities' but the lead authorities have not yet been formally named. Sufficient resources will be needed, and there have been some promises but as yet no clarity, from the government. LNRS will also need to be given sufficient weight e.g. in planning policy.</p> <p>Proposals for deregulation could threaten the success of LNRS if important nature sites lose current protection.</p> <p>For rural areas it is important that the government introduces a new ELMS scheme to incentivise farmers to adopt nature friendly methods since local authorities do not have control over the majority of farmland.</p> <p>Although there has been some piloting of Local Natural Capital Plans, these should be incorporated in LNRSs.</p>	<p>A study commissioned by Defra shows the current levels of resource, capacity and expertise within English local authorities are not adequate to deal with their existing planning workload, let alone any increase required to address additional work on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).</p> <p><a href="https://cieem.net/survey-of-local-authorities-highlights-lack-of-capacity-to-deliver-biodiversity-net-gain/">https://cieem.net/survey-of-local-authorities-highlights-lack-of-capacity-to-deliver-biodiversity-net-gain/</a></p> <p>Similar conclusions reported in the ADEPT / ALGE survey.</p> <p><a href="https://adeptnet.org.uk/ADEPT-ALGE-report-on-LPAs-Biodiversity-Net-Gain">ADEPT-ALGE report on LPAs - Biodiversity Net Gain   ADEPT (adeptnet.org.uk)</a></p>
<p>2 Ensure that the Environment Act will enable local action to deliver genuine gains for nature including a stronger biodiversity duty on local authorities.</p>	<p>The Environment Act included provisions to strengthen and improve the duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including mandating Biodiversity Net Gain through the planning system. Councils welcome new responsibilities to deliver gains for biodiversity in their areas but it is essential that planning departments are supported with the right skills and resources to make this work. BNG income should be retained in the local area. (Local authorities will also have to produce a biodiversity report every five years.)</p>	<p>A study commissioned by Defra shows the current levels of resource, capacity and expertise within English local authorities are not adequate to deal with their existing planning workload, let alone any increase required to address additional work on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).</p> <p><a href="https://cieem.net/survey-of-local-authorities-highlights-lack-of-capacity-to-deliver-biodiversity-net-gain/">https://cieem.net/survey-of-local-authorities-highlights-lack-of-capacity-to-deliver-biodiversity-net-gain/</a></p>

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Enable a strategic response to the climate and ecological crisis</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>3 Ensure that local authorities have access to habitat baseline data, species data and land use data that will enable them to map existing local places of importance for nature.</p>	<p>It is not clear how Defra intends to address data gaps - including species information - that will be important for the robust implementation of BNG and LNRS.</p> <p>Some progress on mapping e.g. Green Infrastructure Mapping due from Natural England should be a useful tool.</p>	
<b>Enable delivery of natural climate solutions</b>		
<p>4 The National Tree Strategy should commit to increase funding for local authority tree planting and maintenance, including large-scale woodland and re-wilding programmes in appropriate locations and in close collaboration with local wildlife and community groups.</p> <p>Support is also needed to tackle ash dieback.</p>	<p>Tree Strategy confirmed £500 million of the £640 million Nature for Climate Fund for tree planting (e.g. Urban Tree Challenge Fund, Treescapes Fund) which has enabled some local authorities to act on local tree planting targets but does not provide the long-term funding needed across all areas of the country including for ongoing tree maintenance.</p> <p>There is also the Defra / Forestry Commission <a href="#">Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund</a> - for county/combined/unitary local authorities only - providing revenue support for the additional staff / consultants required to accelerate plans for tree and woodland planting.</p> <p>There is a toolkit to tackle ash dieback, but no new funding.</p>	
<p>5 Properly fund local authorities to manage parks, open spaces, and public rights of way, and create new nature-rich green spaces (including pocket parks) accessible to all.</p>	<p>The LUWP promises to "radically expand investment in parks", but this funding will only benefit 30 existing parks. This kind of cherry-picked one-off investment in particular spaces will not address inequalities in access to high quality green spaces.</p>	

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Enable delivery of natural climate solutions</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p><b>6</b> Increase the importance of protecting green and blue infrastructure within the grant-in-aid formula for flood defence funding.</p>	<p>Not aware of any progress.</p>	
<p><b>7</b> Ensure that Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) receive adequate funding, with long term certainty, to plan and deliver effective flood defences, and to plan for adaptation to a changing climate.</p>	<p>LLFAs get their money as part of the overall settlement for councils (Revenue Support Grant and council tax). There is no ring-fenced government money for LLFA statutory duties so it is in the mix with the overall funding picture.</p> <p>Although £200m was allocated in the 2020 budget to the Flood and Coastal Resilience Management innovation programme this is only benefiting a limited number of local areas - the bulk (£150m) being allocated to 25 local areas.</p>	

## Theme 7 - Developing local authority funding, governance and accounting systems that are fit for purpose

Progress status:



Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Support adequate long-term funding and financing for local authorities</b>		
<p>1 Support new fundraising powers that can help to drive decarbonisation, such as the payroll public transport levy widely used in France.</p>	<p>No change. Payroll levies are not an option for councils in the UK but are used widely in France and in some US cities to fund public transport.</p> <p>Local authorities can raise funds via a workplace parking levy; Nottingham City Council is the only council to do so to date. The council has invested in public transport including tram, bus and railway station improvements.</p> <p>Local authorities can also introduce Clean Air Zones - this includes Bath, Birmingham, Bradford and Portsmouth. The income is invested in measures which improve air quality (with co-benefits for lower carbon emissions).</p>	<p><a href="https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/should-transport-in-london-be-funded-in-the-same-way-as-in-paris/">https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/should-transport-in-london-be-funded-in-the-same-way-as-in-paris/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.uk/clean-air-zones">www.gov.uk/clean-air-zones</a></p>
<p>2 Use the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to fund the transition to the low carbon economy, particularly in areas where the transition is most challenging, including spending on skills, infrastructure, and supply chains.</p>	<p>In the new Shared Prosperity Fund 2022, bids should 'take account' of net zero but a contribution to net zero is not required or identified as a key investment priority. This is likely to result in missed opportunities to align measures to boost local economies, skills and jobs with net zero targets.</p>	

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Support standards, data and guidance for the local low carbon transition</b>		
<p>1 Government strategies - for example, National Infrastructure, Decarbonising Transport, Heat and Buildings, Green Finance, and Energy White Paper - should provide more detailed targets and clear trajectories for decarbonising key sectors and activities (energy, buildings, transport, industry, agriculture, and land use).</p>	<p>The Decarbonising Transport Strategy was published in 2021 with some target dates. Detailed guidance for decarbonisation in Local Transport Plans is still awaited.</p> <p>The Energy Strategy 2022 set out new commitments for offshore wind but failed to address the urgent need for energy efficiency.</p> <p>There are concerns that under proposals in the 2022 Growth Plan, planning for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) could be amended to fast track high carbon schemes such as new roads as well as potentially benefiting low carbon infrastructure like onshore wind. In addition, plans announced in the Levelling Up &amp; Regeneration Bill to replace Environmental Impact Assessments with Environmental Outcome Reports (EOR) could weaken the scrutiny of climate and other environmental impacts of major development.</p>	<p><a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009448/decarbonising-transport-a-better-greener-britain.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009448/decarbonising-transport-a-better-greener-britain.pdf</a></p>
<p>2 Provide local authorities, combined authorities, sub-national transport bodies and Local Enterprise Partnerships with the evidence that helps them apply policies and target resources to deliver necessary cuts in carbon emissions.</p>	<p>The Net Zero Strategy (Oct 2021) included a commitment to help ensure the public sector takes a consistent and coherent approach and has the appropriate information and incentives to decarbonise.</p> <p>However, in November 2022 the Commons Public Accounts Committee reported that the UK government is failing to lead by example on taking action to cut greenhouse gas emissions and meet net zero by 2050 - across Whitehall departments the rules for reporting, gathering data and taking action are vague, there is a free-for-all on reporting emissions reductions or the lack of them, and oversight is fragmented and ineffective. Public bodies are not making effective and consistent use of emissions data to drive decision-making.</p>	

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Evidence/illustration</i>
<b>Support standards, data and guidance for the local low carbon transition</b>		
<p>3 Reform national infrastructure investment and the Green Book so that the appraisal of public sector policies, programmes and investments includes the economic costs of climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p>	<p>Some progress - the new Green Book published in March 2022 requires all projects to consider their impacts on carbon emissions, whether or not they directly target the <a href="#">net zero objective</a>. It also provides further guidance on how emissions should be assessed. While this is to be welcomed, it does not appear to be the step change required and the impact of the revisions is yet to be seen. In addition, valuation guidance for biodiversity is still outstanding and the Green Book is silent on climate change adaptation.</p> <p>In June 2022 the Treasury called for evidence to support its review of the UK Green Finance Strategy, which aims to green financial systems and mobilise finance for clean and resilient growth. It is welcome that this included a section on ensuring access to green finance for local authorities, and an advisory role for the UK Infrastructure Bank to help local authorities develop and finance projects. The updated Strategy is due to be published by the end of 2022.</p>	
<p>4 Require public bodies such as Highways England, Network Rail and Homes England, to take local and national environmental strategies and plans into account when planning and delivering new schemes.</p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework requires further strengthening to require new transport, buildings and energy infrastructure to be consistent with the net zero 2050 target.</p>	
<p>5 Require new infrastructure schemes to deliver multiple benefits. For example, new rail routes should be built with parallel cycling and/or walking routes and digital fibre to significantly reduce costs at the point of construction and negate the need for retrofitting.</p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework requires further strengthening to require new transport, buildings and energy infrastructure to be consistent with the net zero 2050 target.</p>	

Recommendation	Progress	Evidence/illustration
<b>Support standards, data and guidance for the local low carbon transition</b> <i>(continued)</i>		
<p>6 Require all local government procurement to evaluate social value including environmental value, and to contribute to achieving national environmental goals.</p>	<p>The Procurement Bill is still making its way through Parliament. According to the government fact sheet: "While value for money will be the highest priority in procurement, the Bill will require buyers to take account of national strategic priorities such as job creation potential, improving supplier resilience and tackling climate change".</p>	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/simpler-more-flexible-and-transparent-procurement">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/simpler-more-flexible-and-transparent-procurement</a></p>
<p>7 Support the development of common standards for carbon emissions reporting</p>	<p>There are no mandatory requirements for local government to report to national government on net zero, except under the Home Energy Conservation Act.</p> <p>The Climate Change Committee (Dec 2021) has warned that significant time and expertise is spent extrapolating from national to local data, dealing with contradictory information and working out what they should do. The CCC noted that there is a reliance on consultants for tasks like emissions reporting, which is costly, can hinder capacity development within the local authority, and could be better spent on delivery.</p> <p>The Net Zero Strategy (Oct 2021) included a commitment to help ensure the public sector takes a consistent and coherent approach and has the appropriate information and incentives to decarbonise.</p> <p>In June 2022 the Secretary of State for DLUHC announced the establishment of an Office for Local Government (OfLog), which proposes to support data reporting by councils on climate change and the environment.</p> <p>However, in November 2022 the Commons Public Accounts Committee reported that the UK government is failing to lead by example including on emissions reductions reporting (see point 2 above).</p>	<p>The 2021 LGA Climate Change Survey indicates that 86 per cent of local authorities are reporting on Scope 1 and 2 emissions for their own operations, with a further 54 per cent reporting on some Scope 3 for their own operations.</p> <p>"Gove announces multi year funding and new office for Local Government"   Local Government Chronicle (LGC)</p> <p><a href="https://www.lgcplus.com/finance/gove-announces-multi-year-funding-and-new-office-for-local-government-28-06-2022/">https://www.lgcplus.com/finance/gove-announces-multi-year-funding-and-new-office-for-local-government-28-06-2022/</a></p>



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