

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
United Kingdom

29 March 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to you as members of the Blueprint coalition of local government representatives, researchers, and green groups. We have just completed 40 in-depth case studies of councils taking action on climate change (available at <https://foe.uk/jhyi9>). There are important policy implications that emerge from this research which we would appreciate the opportunity of discussing with you and your officials.

As you know, the government's ambitions on climate change, nature and levelling-up will not be met without the active participation of councils. Councils along with many other groups want to play their part and understand that action on climate change and nature is intrinsically linked to local economic recovery and reducing health inequalities.

The [case studies](#) we have published include:

- Warrington Borough Council, which raised funds for a renewable energy project through community municipal bonds that could be purchased for as little as £5 by residents
- South Gloucestershire Council, which raised £1.5 million via the Community Infrastructure Levy to fund measures in its climate action plan including electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Pembrokeshire County Council which supports a share, repair and reuse network that cuts waste and develops job skills
- Leicester city Council which has invested in electric buses, 8km of new bus priority measures and 26km of active travel routes to cut congestion and emissions.
- North-East Derbyshire District Council, which upgraded hundreds of council homes to improve energy efficiency and alleviate fuel poverty simultaneously
- Hastings Borough Council working with East Sussex County Council is helping home owners and private renters make their homes energy efficient with its Warm Homes Check Service.
- Wirral Council, which adopted an ambitious tree strategy to plant 210,000 by 2030 and protect existing trees
- Kent County Council which has set out a comprehensive strategy to halt biodiversity loss and strongly links action on nature and climate.
- Derry and Strabane District Council, which is one of the first local authorities in the UK to have created a zero-waste circular economy strategy

The policy implications that have emerged from this research and which need government action include:

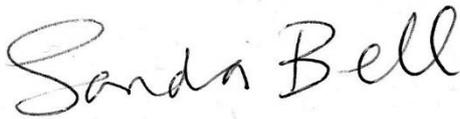
- The complexity of accessing funds through a myriad of competitive funding streams that are too often short-term in nature which, together with very limited powers to raise their own funds, creates a significant hurdle to participation and delivery.
- The green skills gap, both within councils and within the local authority area, which hinders progress.
- The time it is taking for some government policy positions to be finalised. For example, with BEIS's proposed private rented-sector standards and the associated resources for councils' regulatory role.
- The current lack of a shared understanding between government and local authorities on the respective roles in relation to delivery in critical areas such as heating and green skills.

- The lack of clear alignment between national planning policy and legally binding carbon reduction targets.

We realise that these issues may be considered by the new Local Net Zero Forum, and we are currently waiting for the Terms of Reference, we will write to BEIS separately. But we also believe that it is necessary to engage you and your department on these critical issues.

We hope you agree that these 40 case studies are useful and positive examples of place-based action that deliver multiple benefits. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the policy implications and the opportunities with you and your officials so we can build upon such case-studies and extend them systematically across the country in order to meet our climate targets.

Yours sincerely



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On behalf of

Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT)
Ashden
Centre for Alternative Technology
Climate Emergency UK
Friends of the Earth
Grantham Institute – Climate Change and the Environment (Imperial College London)
London Environment Directors Network (LEDNet)
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)
Place-based Climate Action Network (PCAN) at LSE

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