



















Taking action together on Climate Emergency declarations

Recommendations for councils based on the Staffordshire Councils Innovation Lab





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Taking action together on Climate Emergency declarations

Recommendations for councils based on the Staffordshire Councils Innovation Lab

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Introduction

Across the UK, councils have been making Climate Emergency declarations to demonstrate that they acknowledge the urgency of tackling climate change and are committed to taking action. At the time of writing, Climate Emergency UK shows that 336 councils out of 409 have declared a Climate Emergency and 270 have declared an emergency and have a plan to reach net zero. Despite these commitments, local authorities still need to understand how these targets will be met and put monitoring and evaluation processes in place to measure and report on progress.

In 2021, the Centre for Alternative Technology's Zero Carbon Britain team and Keele University worked with 10 councils across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-trent to explore the challenges they face in reaching net zero and co-create an approach to achieve their climate goals. A Zero Carbon Britain Innovation Lab brought together representatives from the 10 councils for three days of workshops to explore how they could work together to take climate action. The process helped the participants to better understand the barriers to reaching net zero, create a vision for the county, and set out objectives towards achieving their individual and collective aims.

By working collaboratively across the county to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies, the councils hoped to save money, work more efficiently, and have a better chance of making progress at the speed and scale needed. The Staffordshire Councils Innovation Lab included the nine district, borough and county councils within Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Stoke-on-Trent being geographically situated within the county of Staffordshire offers opportunities for collaboration across the county as a whole. From this point, 'Staffordshire councils' has been used for brevity, however please note this includes the unitary authority of Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

This report shares findings and recommendations from the Staffordshire Councils Innovation Lab. It aims to support other councils across the UK in developing their climate action plans and working towards net zero.

Aims

The Staffordshire Councils Innovation Lab had the following aims:

- Understand how councils can work together to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies
- Improve understanding of the principles of CAT's Zero Carbon Britain research (see box, page 2)
- Explore the barriers to reaching net zero
- Understand the needs of the councils in their journey to net zero
- Determine appropriate governance for climate and biodiversity emergencies work across Staffordshire councils.
- Support councils on their journey to net zero and ensure they have the appropriate tools
- Ensure effective collaboration and resource sharing into the future

In addition to these aims, the Lab intended to:

- Provide a collaborative co-creative approach to engage and empower councils in driving action towards Climate Emergency declarations and reaching net zero
- Bring representatives from all county, district, borough and city councils across Staffordshire together to create a cross-council county-wide approach to implementing climate action plans
- Include voices and representation from all levels within councils, from officers to senior management and elected members
- Facilitate a space for reflection and learning together to benefit from all individuals' expertise
- Understand the barriers currently faced by councils and work with them to explore and devise solutions and ways forward from this initial process
- Create a series of recommendations specific to Staffordshire councils to enable the Innovation Lab process to drive organisational change and action to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergencies
- Create a series of recommendations that local authorities could implement in their own counties and regions

Although the Zero Carbon Britain team at CAT compiled this report, the outputs and findings are based solely on reflections, discussions and feedback from participants. During each workshop, notetakers recorded points raised during breakout room activities which informed the analysis, and at each stage, the findings were fed back to participants. With this in mind, please note, the detailed outputs do not necessarily reflect the views of CAT, however, the recommendations are our recommendations based on the findings.

Zero Carbon Britain

All emissions that can go to zero must go to zero – as rapidly as possible. Not just from electricity, but also from heat, transport, industry and land use.

We have the tools to do it. CAT's Zero Carbon Britain research clearly demonstrates that we already have all the technologies we need to achieve zero carbon emissions.

Our latest report, Rising to the Climate Emergency, is free to download: https://cat.org.uk/zcb-report

The Zero Carbon Britain Hub and Innovation Lab helps turn climate and biodiversity emergency declarations into action. With technical solutions readily available, the momentum is building in our towns and cities to reach net zero as quickly as possible.

We provide councils, communities and other organisations with the knowledge, confidence and skills to transform complex economic, social and political systems and achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.



Participants

The Staffordshire Councils Innovation Lab brought together representatives from 10 councils (Table 1). Having representation from all county, district, borough and city councils maximised opportunities and efficiencies in co-creating an approach to tackling the climate and biodiversity emergencies. This is also significant as climate issues and infrastructure investments invariably cross council boundaries.

Table 1: 10 councils involved in the Staffordshire Councils Innovation Lab

Staffordshire County Council	Stafford Borough Council
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
East Staffordshire Borough Council	Lichfield District Council
South Staffordshire District Council	Tamworth Borough Council
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	Cannock Chase District Council

Participants in the Innovation Lab represented a broad range of services and roles at different levels across the councils, including officers, managers, directors, CEOs and elected members. Involving a diverse range of staff was important to benefit from expertise and perspectives from across the councils and recognise that climate action needs to happen in all areas of council operations. Bringing people together and listening to the voices of those who may not usually have the chance to collaborate would help identify new connections and shared opportunities both within and between councils.



The Innovation Lab approach

An Innovation Lab approach was chosen due to its ability to help tackle complex issues or challenges using collaborative problem solving.

The process is:

- **Co-creative** Drawing on a range of perspectives and experiences to inform the process and ultimately co-design solutions that are fit-for-purpose and feasible.
- Experimental Taking an iterative approach, prototyping interventions and amending them until they are right (learning from failure along the way).
- Sense-making Helping participants understand what's happening and why, let go of preconceived ideas and be open to new approaches.
- Design thinking Taking a user-centred approach, based on the experience of those impacted by the problem and those who deliver the solution.
- Systemic Ensuring the ideas developed go beyond dealing with the symptoms to address the root cause of the problem.

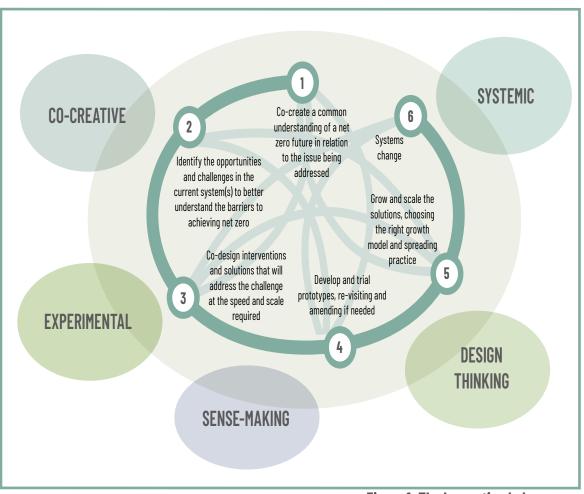


Figure 1: The Innovation Lab process



The Roaches in Staffordshire Lukasz Pajor/Shutterstock.com

The workshops

The Staffordshire Councils Innovation Lab comprised three full-day participatory workshops.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, all the workshops took place online, with some facilitated breakout room sessions for smaller group discussions. Mural – an online collaborative tool – was used to collect and explore ideas, develop understanding together, and construct a plan for action.

The workshops built on each other, including reflection on previous sessions so the participants could better understand the context the councils are working in, the challenges they face, and the next steps to turn Climate Emergency declarations into action.

The first two workshops explored:

- The barriers to achieving net zero within the current system
- What a net zero Staffordshire could look like
- Potential interventions to better enable the councils to reach net zero

The third workshop explored priority areas for collaborative action and potential governance structures to support cross-council collaboration.

The Lab generated a significant amount of data from the contributions of participants. This data was analysed to identify themes across the responses. Grouping the data in this way enabled the Zero Carbon Britain team and the council participants to understand the relationships between the challenges and consider the role of the underlying structures at organisational, local, regional and national levels impacting progress towards net zero. Building on this understanding, the participants worked together to propose strategies to overcome these challenges.

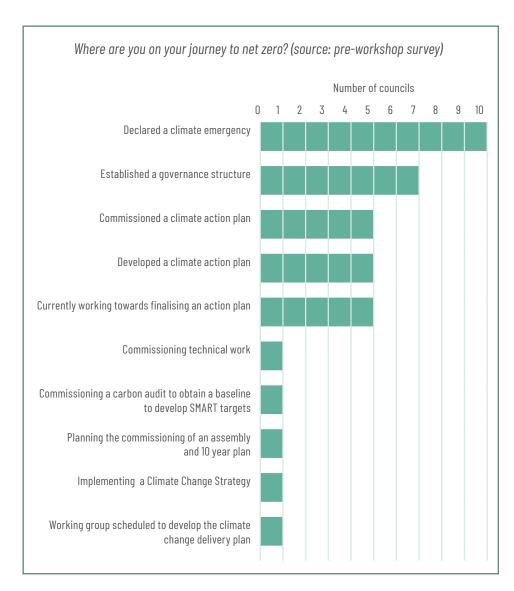


Figure 2: Pre-workshop survey results showing where the 10 councils were in their journey to net zero

Before the workshops

Before the first workshop, participants were invited to complete a survey to establish the current position of the councils across Staffordshire – a benchmark against which to measure progress. It enabled the Zero Carbon Britain team and the participants to understand commonalities and differences between the councils' commitments, aims and ambitions, and the scope of their net zero targets.

Figure 2 shows the range of activities taking place across the county when the Innovation Lab began, with the most common action being the declaration of a climate emergency, followed by the establishment of a governance structure to take action. Fewer than half of the councils had moved beyond commissioning a climate action plan to the development and implementation stages. However, one council reported working towards finalising their action plan, commissioning technical work and a carbon audit, planning a climate assembly, implementing a climate change strategy, and scheduling a climate change working group.

The pre-workshop questionnaire also identified variation across Staffordshire in terms of the date when councils aimed to reach net zero, and the scope of their ambition. Target dates ranged from 2030 to 2050, with some councils aiming to address only their own emissions, while others intended to include emissions from across the locality (scopes 1, 2 and 3).

The participants were asked what they wanted to get out of the Lab. As well as helping to shape the process, this was useful to start them thinking about their goals and challenges.

Workshop 1

Workshop 1 aimed to understand the current context the participants were working in, and introduce how the Innovation Lab process could help them overcome their challenges and take action to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergencies.

The workshop began with an invitation to share reflections about what makes Staffordshire great. Themes identified were:

- Pride in the local area and ownership of place
- Access to green space, beautiful countryside and diverse landscapes
- A mix of rural and urban
- A mix of heritage and post-industrial
- Connectivity and location
- Diverse and down-to-earth communities
- Partnership and networking
- Entrepreneurialism and creativity
- A sense of being underestimated an undiscovered hidden gem

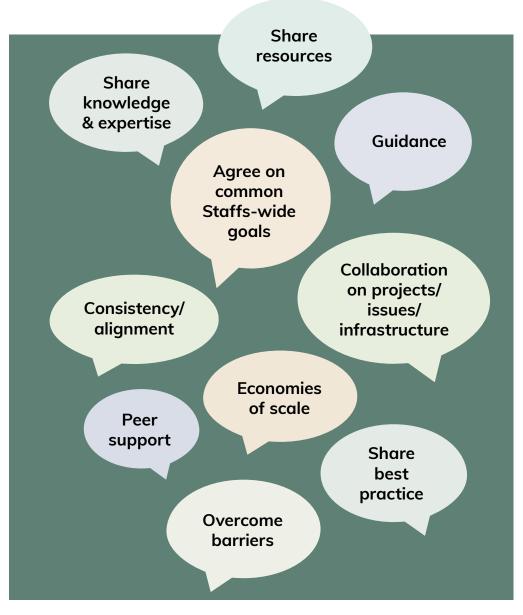


Figure 3: What participants hoped to get out of the Innovation Lab

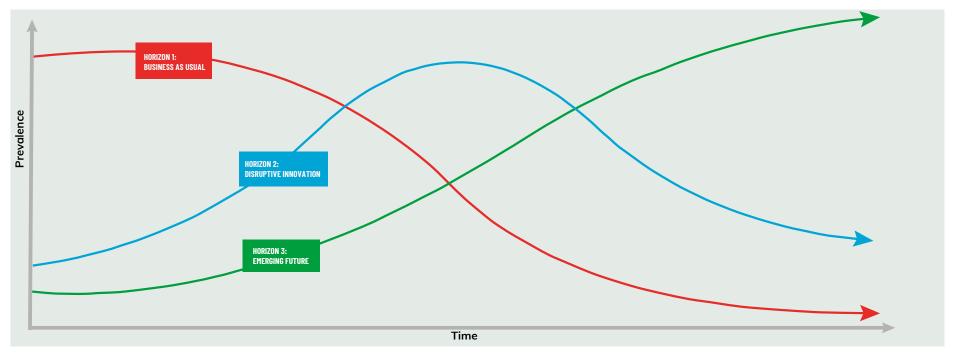


Figure 4: Example template of Three Horizons graph that post-it notes can be mapped to for post-workshop analysis and theme identification

The participants then used the Three Horizons tool to explore current ways of working, what interventions were needed to collectively move towards a viable future, and what was no longer fit for purpose and should be phased out. Horizon 1 shows the barriers to achieving the goal, Horizon 3 shows the participants' vision of a net zero future, and Horizon 2 shows the interventions that can make Horizon 3 a reality.

Participants recorded their thoughts on digital post it notes, which were then placed on the appropriate area of the Three Horizons tool.

All of the outputs for each 'horizon' were analysed and common themes identified. These were then mapped out as leverage points, as shown in **Figure 5**, to demonstrate which interventions will have the greatest impact.

Themes included:

- Infrastructure
- Mindsets and beliefs
- Policy and politics
- Communication
- Land use
- Finance/economics

- Expertise and knowledge
- Health and wellbeing
- Culture
- Technology
- Equality

Workshop 2

At the start of workshop 2, the participants were presented with the outputs from the first workshop and the results of the analysis of their responses, contributions, reflections and discussions.

Participants then went on to explore the next steps they could take based on this analysis, understanding their potential role in creating and implementing interventions to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies.

By exploring 'leverage points', the participants used the outputs of the Three Horizons tool to identify which interventions could have the most impact in changing the current high carbon systems. This was intended to enable these high impact interventions to be prioritised.

'Opportunities' (things there is desire and momentum for) and 'enablers' (things that can make an opportunity happen, e.g. funding) were mapped onto a 'lever' diagram. The further along the lever interventions appear, the greater the leverage in terms of changing the system. Interventions with 'shallow' leverage may be relatively easy-to-implement 'low hanging fruit', and there is value in implementing them, but they will not be enough alone to reach net zero. By contrast, 'deeper' leverage points have the potential for greater impact but may be underresearched and carry more risk. Figure 6 shows the individual interventions within the themes in Figure 5.



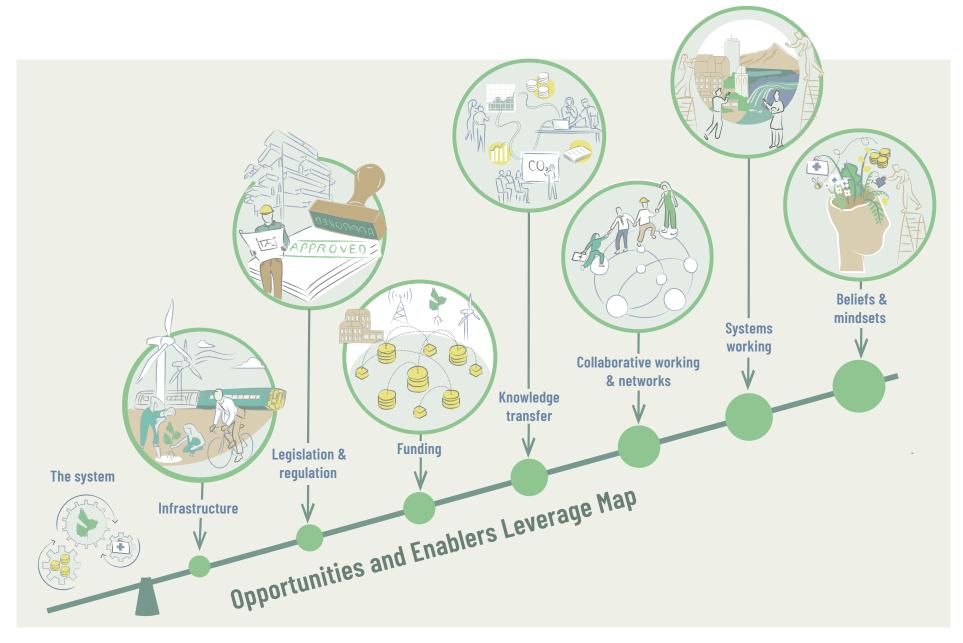


Figure 5: Intervention 'opportunities' and 'enablers' mapped on a lever diagram to prioritise those with most potential impact¹

Figure 6: Opportunities and enablers developed by participants through the Three Horizons activity



Increased leverage & reduced cost if jointly delivered

Public transport

- Run employer cycle schemes to encourage cycling [CW+N]
- Create hub with improved bus/train information Council vehicles
- Switch to electric waste collection fleet

 Procure council-owned electric pool vehicles collectively as a region [CW+N]

Carbon capture / biodiversity

- Plant trees e.a. on former landfill sites
- Introduce anaerobic digestion run co-operatively by farms
- Plant community orchards Adopt nature based solutions

Buildings

- Convert empty office buildings to housing
- allowed by planning framework
- Launch large scale demolition and building refurbishment programme
- Build electric charaina points into new development
- Prioritise building sustainably for council construction projects [LR]
- Leverage countylevel influence to create economies of scale

Energy

- Add green hydrogen to local gas supplies
- Invest in offshore wind
- Create district heating networks between industrial and residential areas
- Use around source heat to power district heating
- Re-purpose council tenanted farmland for renewables

Technology

 Install reliable broadband Invest in technology and incentivise provision of electric charging points [LR]



Community Engagement

- Repeat Decent Homes Review consultation
- Increase people's individual motivations to target actions
- Use trusted messengers e.g. Fire Service
- Provide zero carbon auidance for tenants
- Communicate simple actions that people can do now
- Promote examples of carbon negative behaviours Have local politicians lead by example through
- community engagement Collaborate with online influencers on net zero tips
- and products • Use open dialogue with communities rather than consultation
- Improve communications to engage the public in existing initiatives and community consultation
- Plan region-wide citizen engagement for greater impact
- Engage and educate youth about net zero
- Use digital platforms for communications

 Recognise good practice through community awards scheme

Collaboration and knowledge sharing

- Showcase case studies to councillors e.g. ZCB presentation
- Have conversations with landlords and housina associations
- Share best practice case studies with housing developers
- Deliver joint communications campaign on benefits of climate action using professional PR and marketing [CW]
- Share knowledge across county i.e. portal for good ideas
- Provide information on carbon emissions of products/services
- Learn from UK Climate Assembly
- Adopt a common decisionmaking mechanism across the county
- Promote the co-benefits of climate action
- Make a business case for addressing the climate crisis and investina in zero carbon

Political engagement

Engage politicians through communications

An **opportunity** is something that there is desire and momentum for (and can be related to existing actions/innovations)

An **enabler** is something that can make an opportunity happen (e.g. funding)

Opportunities & Enablers

Cross-cutting factor [initial of area]



Opportunity



Enabler



Fundina

Subsidies

- Incentivise planning permission for carbon neutral developments
- Increase subsidies for public transport to prevent service cuts
- Invest in technology and incentivise provision of electric charging points [LR, In]

Revenue

- Introduce penalties for not sorting waste
- Introduce road charges for non-commercial vehicles e.g. low emissions zone

Collaboration

Bring districts together led by county councils e.a. collective bid for Green **Homes Grant**

Lobbying

- Decentralise funding to smaller councils
- Provide central funding for early adopters of green technologies
- Provide external investment for 5 year action plans with scrutinising panels to provide accountability
- Link EPC with funding for carbon reduction activities [SW]

 Enforce things through local plans, requiring legislation

Legislation &

Regulation [LR]

 Re-write decisionmaking processes to align with net zero

Housing

Governance

- Set minimal level for private rental sector energy efficiency - landlords pay difference
- Build electric charging points into new developments
- Provide one statement across the county on planning to ensure consistency preventing developers picking easier places to build
- Improve BREEAM standards
- Introduce new social housing regulator

- Change building regulations to account for environmental impact [SW] Prioritise building sustainably for council construction – take longer term view than developers [ln]
- Add climate change Appendix todevelopment plans to assess climate change proposals

Waste

- Introduce penalties for not sorting waste
- Reduce bin sizes

Transport

- Increase subsidies for public transport to prevent service cuts
- Introduce road charges for non-commercial vehicles e.g. low emissions zone
- Adopt a legislative framework to drive greener action



Data and monitoring

- Connect with universities
- e.g. borrow drones for thermal imaging
- Make thermal imaging cameras available to the public
- Develop understanding of energy use in council buildinas

- Collect/collate comprehensive land use and emissions data
- Use apps to measure carbon footprint

Training

- Increase technical expertise in relation to climate action
- Deliver Carbon Literacy training across the county
- Provide education for best practice farmina



Cross-discipline working

- Link the EPC with funding for carbon reduction activities
- Combine planning and building control
- Collaborate with businesses to achieve economies of scale e.a. recyclable food containers
- Build zero carbon into asset management plans
- Adopt more inclusive design processes, e.g. multi-stakeholder

Incentives / penalties

Introduce lease incentives for commercial properties to incentivise carbon/energy reduction improvements

Operations

- Encourage elected members to lobby central government more
- Appoint dedicated officers at each council to coordinate efforts
- Ensure carbon emissions are considered in all processes
- Appoint a Carbon Portfolio Holder – this should not fail the **Economic Scrutiny Group**

- Introduce climate change champions in each sector of council work
- Add 'climate change' as a standing item on Chief Executive meeting agendas
- Practice good leadership not management [BM]
- Identify support/ skills / infrastructure needed for working from home



Community engagement

- Explore interventions for public behaviour change
- Ensure carbon cuts across companies to invest operations through scrutiny across all departments
- Support local zero carbon economy
- Co-ordinate region-wide citizen engagement for greater impact
- Support existing community groups - leadership role for district/borough councils

Political leadership

- Lobby central government for legislation on new builds
- Co-ordinate Chief Executive lobbying of national government
- Ensure consistent messaging across regions to MPs then to national government [KT]

- Encourage pension companies to invest responsibly
- Support legal challenges at national level, e.a. Client Earth
- Encourage pension responsibly

Organisational structure/ operations

- Provide one statement across the county on planning to ensure consistency preventing developers picking easier places to build
- Provide a cycle to work scheme across all councils including infrastructure at work
- Establish a joint Zero Carbon board to bring leads together
- Increase cross boundary working - use near neighbours of major metropolitan areas

- Partner with other councils to address the biodiversity emergency
- Appoint dedicated officers at each council to coordinate efforts
- Bring districts together led by county councils e.g. collective bid for Green Homes Grant
- Set up an unofficial collaboration mechanism

Sharing best practice

- Learn from examples of good practice, e.g. Nottingham supplies own water
- Share strategies for climate action
- Collaborate to share knowledge across county

National infrastructure

- Consider the potential impact of re-wilding on food production
- Utilise place shaping to encourage active travel

Synergistic working

- Adopt new energy service models e.g. linked to housing development **ISW1**
- Include zero carbon in Covid recovery plans
- Use a combined approach across the county for procurement and monitoring key suppliers/policies
- Ensure better planning between departments, e.g. planning wind turbines
- Collaborate to increase recognition and take advantage of co-benefits

Public health

- Encourage doctors to adopt social prescribing
- Make connections between climate change strategies and health / wellbeing benefits
- Replicate health and wellbeing partnerships and apply them to net zero

Beliefs and mindsets [BM]

Accountability

- Put consumer pressure on companies to improve performance
- Carry out personal energy audits and link outputs to co-benefits
- Utilise member-led change in ways of thinking
- Encourage county officials to act and see importance/urgency of issues

COVID-19

- Retain benefits accrued during COVID
- Build back green and include zero carbon in COVID recovery plans

Public perceptions

- Ensure the public understands 'net zero' [KT
- Drive cultural change to see wasting energy as unacceptable
- Build on people's perceptions of the change in the world around them
- Link health and wellbeing to climate

Council perceptions

- Highlight money saving from going green (investment)
- Change attitudes to 'spend to save' schemes in local and central government
- Translate thinking into action
- Build on flexibility and adaptability of councils
- Practice good leadership not management [SW]

Cross-cutting factor [initial of area]



Enabler

The map revealed several interventions that would require or be more impactful through collaboration within or between councils and with local communities and organisations. Understanding the need for collaboration and the influence councils have was therefore explored through stakeholder mapping.

The participants mapped the stakeholders and the relationships between their goals and the councils' goals, including indicating strong or weak alignment. They also looked for opportunities and threats in these relationships. **Figure 7** shows an example template that councils could adapt to create their own stakeholder map.

Workshop 3

To make the most of the time available, participants began the third workshop by voting for their top three previously identified interventions from five defined categories:

- Infrastructure
- Legislation, stakeholder support and funding
- Improving information flows, knowledge and expertise
- New rules for systems working and co-benefits
- Collaborative working and beliefs and mindsets

Participants went on to explore how to tackle these priorities around a 'how might we' statement, building on each other's ideas through a co-creative process. For each intervention, participants wrote a 'how might we' statement as follows: 'How might we…' (action) 'for…' (user group) 'so that…' (outcome). An example statement based on promoting the business case

for addressing the climate crisis is: 'How might we ensure that businesses can capitalise on green initiatives/grants to maximise carbon saving benefits?'

As collaboration was an overarching aim of the Innovation Lab, the participants then focused on how a more collaborative approach could be adopted by the councils to implement these high priority interventions.

Discussions about how collaborative processes could be implemented led to 'governance' being identified and explored as a central driver and enabler for collaboration both within and outside the councils. This is outlined further in the findings and recommendations.

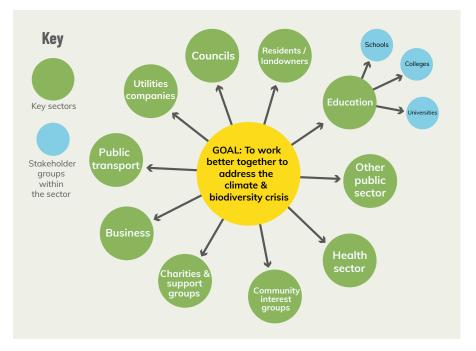


Figure 7: Example of stakeholder mapping template

Findings and recommendations

The following findings and recommendations are based on the discussions and proposed interventions co-designed with the participants of the Staffordshire Councils Innovation Lab. Like the workshops, they focus on how councils can work better together to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies and what changes can be made within councils.

Governance

Good governance is essential at all levels to achieve net zero goals. To achieve this, systems-thinking should be built into all processes, policies and decision-making.

- Clear internal structures and roles are needed to enable clarity around accountability and delivery on climate action – genuine distributed responsibility empowers people across all services to act
- Regular internal communications on the climate and biodiversity emergencies are necessary to remind staff of the commitment to achieve net zero and develop a culture of action
- Leading by example and 'walking the talk' demonstrates responsibility and legitimacy for achieving commitments set out in Climate Emergency declarations
- Consistency and transparency between councils enables learning, sharing and mutual accountability

Recommendations

- » High-level decision-makers and elected members must consider the climate and biodiversity emergencies and related issues in all decisions
- » Form a small working group of decision-makers from each council in the county or region to develop a proposal for coordinating cross-council climate action
- » Establish an independently-led regional climate hub, including external partners, to act as a steering group for all matters related to addressing the climate and biodiversity emergencies
- » Make the climate and biodiversity emergencies a fixed item on regular meeting agendas
- » Review internal structures to reduce silo working and promote genuine distributed responsibility, drawing on approaches in other councils
- » Share regular internal communications reminding staff of the council's Climate Emergency declaration and commitment to achieving net zero
- » Address the differences between councils in net zero targets and scope, with a view to aligning them (this could be facilitated through external support)

Collaboration and impact

There are several opportunities for councils to collaborate to have a bigger impact, including:

- Lobbying e.g. central government, for funding, guidance and support; funding bodies; building regulations and planning bodies, to ensure commitment to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and consistency in their approach
- Communication (e.g. county-wide external communication to ensure clarity and consistency in approach; internal communications to emphasise climate action is everybody's business) – drawing on behavioural insights and highlighting the co-benefits of addressing the climate and biodiversity emergencies
- Procurement and development (potential for county-wide procurement, e.g. electric vehicle (EV) networks, investment in renewables, training)
- Sharing and driving good practice within councils, between councils and with external stakeholders (e.g. developing a peerreview system; comparing activities, targets, and structures; working with external stakeholders to create innovative practice and projects; creating and sharing case studies to enable good practice to be adopted by others; engaging elected members more directly with climate action work, including collaboration within and between councils; promoting co-benefits of climate action, such as improved health and wellbeing, equality and green jobs)
- Reducing silo working creating a culture of genuine collaborative working to empower people and encourage ownership for implementing interventions

Delivering Carbon Literacy, train-the-trainer, and leadership/ facilitation training across all councils – empowering staff to act in their own sphere of influence; creating cascaded learning to increase reach; enabling staff to apply collaboration, co-design and facilitation skills

Recommendations

- » Include a focus on opportunities for collaboration as part of a governance working group, with a view to creating working groups to lead on each area
- » Deliver Carbon Literacy training for service leads (as a minimum) and training for several individuals to deliver further in-house training
- » Offer leadership and facilitation training for staff in all service areas to develop facilitation, collaboration and co-design skills in the context of addressing the climate and biodiversity emergencies

Stakeholder engagement

In addition to developing collaboration within and between councils, there are opportunities to build relationships and collaborate with external stakeholders across the county – including businesses, sectors such as health and education, environmental groups and the wider community. This can increase knowledge exchange, help achieve shared goals, and enable partners to enjoy the co-benefits of climate action. Genuine stakeholder engagement can make action on the climate and biodiversity emergencies more efficient and more effective, while avoiding reducing engagement to low-impact tick-box exercises.

Potential interventions include:

- Promoting partnership with the wider community including businesses, environmental groups, and sectors such as health and education, for expertise, funding and collaborative projects
- Establishing a stakeholder engagement structure with officers with assigned responsibilities that include regular communication with stakeholders
- Bringing all stakeholders together to identify local needs and working collectively to develop solutions on climate action
- Working with stakeholders to identify the co-benefits of climate action, such as meeting individual and collective needs and priorities
- Communicating local climate action policies to identified user groups so there is a co-ordinated and consistent approach

Recommendations

- » Bring together people across the county to collaboratively map stakeholders and design an engagement strategy
- » Provide workshops and training on effectively engaging with community groups and other local stakeholders

Resourcing

Through collaborative cross-county approaches, resourcing action on the climate and biodiversity emergencies can be made more efficient through:

- Establishing local environmental funding streams
- Making joint funding applications within and between councils and with external stakeholders
- Allocating budget for climate change working groups
- Building staff capacity e.g. establishing a technical solutions team
- Investing in infrastructure e.g. funding EV charging points and district heating networks; setting up a green energy fund from levies raised from the use of EV charging points
- Applying for funding from central government for early adopters of green technologies
- Linking with universities to support applications to fund research projects and innovations
- Working with stakeholders to maximise opportunities for co-benefits from projects and interventions that contribute to reaching net zero
- Embedding carbon reduction into post-COVID policies and investments to provide co-benefits and learn from positive outcomes from changes implemented during the pandemic

Recommendation

» Hold a workshop with finance officers, procurement officers and senior management from across councils to focus on resourcing

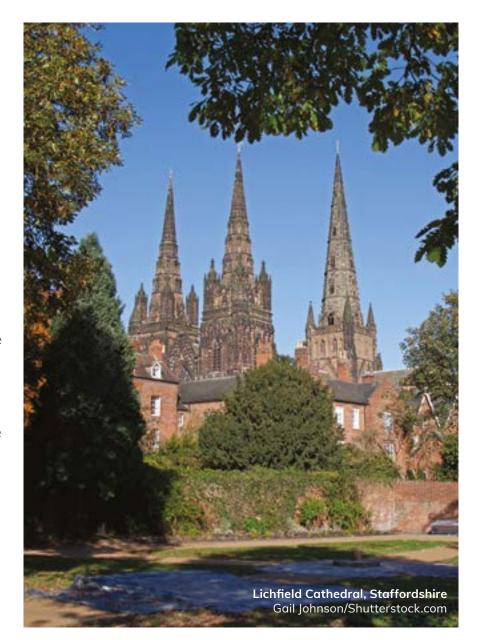
Shared learning and knowledge exchange

Sharing learning can be an effective way to increase engagement and drive action by citizens, businesses and other councils, through:

- Communicating simple actions that can be adopted immediately by citizens, councils and businesses
- Sharing knowledge, reflections and outcomes from consultancy projects
- Using digital communication to share knowledge and information
- Improving communication with stakeholders through existing initiatives (e.g. Transition Towns)
- Communicating messages that will resonate with and motivate the wider community
- Linking with local media to share messages and achievements with the community
- Engaging with schools to inspire future generations and encourage young people to engage in local politics

Recommendation

 Develop a cross-council collaborative online platform and community (e.g. through Microsoft Teams) to create a 'safe space' to share information, offer ideas and ask questions



Glossary

Climate action plan

A framework with targets and objectives to work towards achieving net zero.

Climate assembly

A form of deliberative participatory democracy, enabling citizens to be engaged in decision making on issues such as climate change.

Climate and biodiversity emergency

Climate breakdown that will result in serious humanitarian, social and environmental impacts. Irreversible biodiversity loss driven by climate change, land use change, over-exploitation and pollution, among other factors.

Climate emergency declaration

An acknowledgement of the climate emergency by an organisation and a commitment to reduce their emissions and impact.

Co-benefits

Additional outcomes beyond carbon reduction that could be realised through interventions, for example, increased wellbeing.

Co-creation

A form of open policy, strategy or product development, which draws on the perspectives of a range of key stakeholders and blends their ideas to create new ideas.

Councils

All the county, district, borough and city councils within Staffordshire that participated in the Innovation Lab.

Innovation Lab

A form of collaborative problem solving, drawing on insights and experiences of stakeholders to create solutions to the problem in question.

Interventions

Actions that were identified that could enable councils to reduce their carbon emissions.

Net zero

Reducing emissions to zero from operations, energy, buildings and infrastructure and powering activity with clean energy, with residual emissions being balanced with natural carbon capture.

Participants

The members of the councils who took part in the Innovation Lab.

Scope

The context and boundaries that councils are including in their net zero targets.

Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions

Scope 1 accounts for direct emissions from sources councils own or control; scope 2 emissions are generated from energy purchased by councils for heating, cooling or power; scope 3 covers remaining indirect emissions in supply chains, for example, procurement.

Stakeholder

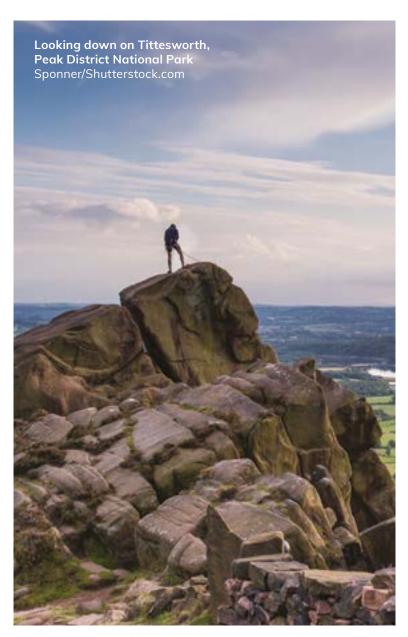
An individual or organisation that has influence over, or will be impacted by the process in question, e.g. a project or policy.

Target date

The date by which councils commit to reach net zero.

Three Horizons

An approach used in the Innovation Lab to help groups think about the future, by exploring systemic patterns to understand which are no longer fit for purpose, emerging trends that can help shape the future, and the interventions required to move us towards a viable future.



More climate action examples and resources

ARUP: https://www.arup.com/perspectives/publications/promotional-materials/section/youve-declared-a-climate-emergency-what-next-guidance-for-local-authorities

Ashden & Friends of the Earth – 31 Climate Actions for Councils: https://ashden.org/storage/2020/08/31-Climate-Actions-for-Councils.pdf

Ashden – Climate action co-benefits toolkit: https://cobenefits-toolkit.ashden.org/

Climate Emergency UK climate action plan checklist: https://www.climateemergency.uk/local-authority-checklist/

Cornwall Council - Doughnut economics:

 $\underline{https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/cornwall-council-doughnut-economics}$

Cumbria Action for Sustainability: https://cafs.org.uk/

LGA Climate Change Hub:

https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/climate-change-hub

Zero Carbon Dorset: https://www.dorset2030.com/

Zero Carbon Shropshire: https://zerocarbonshropshire.org/

CAT Zero Carbon Britain Hub and Innovation Lab: https://cat.org.uk/info-resources/zero-carbon-britain

A wide range of other resources to support councils in their work can be found in the Zero Carbon Britain Resource Hub. The Zero Carbon Britain team is also able to deliver Carbon Literacy and bespoke training courses to support councils in their net zero journeys. Contact the Zero Carbon Britain team for more information.



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This report presents findings from the Staffordshire Councils Zero Carbon Britain Innovation Lab and makes recommendations to accelerate action on the Climate Emergency declarations made by councils across the UK.

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