



## Core Cities UK: Tackling the Climate Emergency

As thousands of our concerned citizens prepare to travel to London to join Extinction Rebellion's climate protest, Core Cities UK Leaders and Mayors have a message for Government:

***'Action taken in the Core Cities will determine whether the UK succeeds or fails to tackle this climate emergency. Our city regions are significant. Home to 20 million people, we generate 26% of the UK's economic output and we are already working together to deliver Net Zero Carbon.***

***But we need far more radical, innovative and urgent action, built on a renewed local/national partnership. When a major incident is declared, different services come together seamlessly to play their part. This is a major emergency, we need the same approach and we call on Government to establish a Climate Emergency Task Force with us to drive change.'***

Cutting carbon emissions is one of our country's greatest challenges but time is running short. Core Cities UK is already playing a vital role in tackling climate change. Government data shows that CO2 emission reductions made so far in Core Cities have been greater than the UK as a whole. All our cities have declared or will declare climate emergencies and have set new goals to achieve carbon neutrality much sooner than 2050. Our work to decarbonise our cities is innovative and well under way. It ranges across pioneering energy investment programmes, district heating networks, deep home retrofitting schemes, electric vehicles and solar carports. But we cannot achieve current targets or accelerate progress without significant Government action in all areas, across planning, legislation, finance, policy and regulation. The urgency of the situation calls for a better system. Government departments, national agencies and local government need to be connected and aligned in the same way that the emergency services work together during major, serious or catastrophic incidents or events.

We want to work with Government to:

- **Create a Climate Emergency Taskforce**
- **Develop a radical new UK Climate Strategy**
- **Engage and empower citizens, business and public bodies to make changes**
- **Transform local economies with clean growth and circular economy principles**

We call on Government to provide:

- **A £1bn Low Carbon City Investment Fund to leverage in £10bn of private sector investment**
- **UK100's call for an enhanced Clean Air Fund of £1.5bn, supporting over 60 local authorities**
- **Taxes on fossil fuels and low carbon incentives to change the market**
- **A new target date of 2025 for new net-zero buildings**
- **Additional funding to train our citizens and workforce**
- **A national infrastructure approach to home and building retrofitting**
- **Modern high speed rail travel to connect all our cities**

## In detail: What Core Cities UK need from Government

The COP26 climate summit being hosted in Glasgow in 2020, demonstrates city leadership on this vital issue. Now is the time for UK Government to work together with Core Cities UK to show the world how we can lead the low carbon revolution and deliver jobs, improve health outcomes and sustain a high quality of life.

The UK's Core Cities have been addressing climate change for years, working hard to decarbonise their cities and prepare for the impacts of climate change. Core Cities' councils have now all passed motions to declare climate emergencies and to bring forward their carbon emission target dates (see table at end). Our work to decarbonise our cities is ambitious and innovative, ranging across pioneering energy investment programmes, district heating networks, deep home retrofitting schemes, electric vehicles and solar carports.

Core Cities Councils have a proven track record of leading action on Climate Change and are widening and accelerating this action in response to the Climate Emergency. However, the cities cannot achieve current targets or accelerate progress to contribute to meeting the UK's new target of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 without significant government action in all areas; across planning, legislation, finance, policy and regulation.

And it all needs to be joined up. It is clear that many Whitehall departments and agencies are involved in developing work on climate change but it is complex to access for local governments and the scale of funding is inadequate. The urgency of the situation calls for a better system. Government departments, national agencies and local government need to be connected and aligned in the same way that the emergency services work together during major, serious or catastrophic incidents or events. We recognise that some of these issues, such as housing and air quality, are devolved to Holyrood, Cardiff Bay and Stormont.

We want to work with Governments to:

- **Create a Climate Emergency Taskforce**, co-ordinating the response and resources of national and local government, echoing the principles of UK emergency response.
- **Develop a radical new UK Climate Strategy** to build a fairer country whilst we decarbonise faster and create a climate resilient society and economy.
- **Engage and empower citizens**, business and public bodies across the UK through a UK Climate Change Communication Programme, to ensure people understand why changes are needed and what the benefits will be, provide access to local services and inspire people to make practical low carbon choices.
- **Transform local economies** to be based upon clean growth and circular economy principles; decoupling carbon emissions from economic output, providing good quality jobs and attracting investment into cities and the UK.

## Core Cities' Package of Key Offers and Asks of Government

### FINANCE

We need Government to use its financial power to stimulate the billions of pounds of investment needed by the public and private sector. Specifically, we call on Government to establish:

- **A £1bn Low Carbon City Investment Fund** that Core Cities can use to stimulate a further £10bn of investment by the public and private sectors and communities; this must include finance for feasibility work. This will ensure that high impact projects can be accelerated and stimulate the wider UK market by achieving economies of scale more quickly.
- **An enhanced Clean Air Fund of £1.5bn** to enable the delivery of Clean Air Zones across the country and support a national fleet renewal programme all with the aim of achieving 'Net Zero' from transport and deliver World Health Organisation compliant air quality standards in the UK. UK100-commissioned research conducted by Cambridge Economic Policy Associates (CEPA) indicates that this could benefit the economy by as much as £6.5bn. This should be seen as the beginning of our investment in Clean Air and further funding may be required.
- **Clear Tax and Incentivisation Policies** to create strong and consistent market signals to induce private sector investment and enable Core Cities to invest with confidence. This specifically includes incentives for local, low carbon energy generation, process energy efficiency measures and uptake of low emission vehicles. An urgent decision to replace or enhance the Renewable Heat Incentive is needed, whose uncertain future is leading to important projects being cancelled. This approach should also include a clear decision on the price of carbon going forward.

### IMPROVING LIVES EVERYWHERE

Collectively we can ensure that even in the short term, the UK's transition to a carbon neutral future delivers benefits for everyone in society – with lower rates of obesity from increases in active travel, improved health and wellbeing due to reduced air pollution, reducing fuel poverty with warm, climate resilient homes, and meaningful employment in constructing and retrofitting our buildings. Specifically, we need:

- **A new target date of 2025 for new net-zero buildings:** Commercial property aside, the current plans for building new homes within the Core Cities will add millions of tonnes of emissions to the atmosphere unless we set the industry a clear timetable for achieving net-zero new developments. This earlier deadline is required to create a level playing field, stimulating innovation in delivery now. We propose 2025 as the target date. A national approach gives Government an opportunity to create a single standard and create a level playing field across the UK, reducing costs for developers.
- **Whole Building Retrofit:** The UK needs a national infrastructure approach to home and building retrofitting to drive action and achieve economies of scale. Core Cities call on Government to create a national home and building retrofit infrastructure programme to enable all homes to have a whole-house treatment by 2035, with funding for households in fuel poverty and incentives for the 'able to pay'. At least £1 billion additional capital funding is needed each year to support energy efficiency measures alone. This approach will enable the supply chain to invest and can be delivered in conjunction with local authorities to use local insight for effective

targeting and deliver co-benefits. Core Cities offer to lead with our council housing stock as a testbed for innovation, share our learning and practical experience to help design the most effective programme and drive change in our areas – linking finance, regeneration, skills and poverty reduction.

- **Transport:** The UK suffers from the highest level of road congestion in Europe (OECD). Providing the capacity for high speed travel between our key centres would free the UK from polluting congestion, whilst unlocking the catalyst for regional regeneration. High-speed rail has lower emissions than other modes of transport, with emissions per passenger-km that are only 36% that of conventional rail, only 12% of those incurred by private car use and just 5% of those generated by air travel. HS2 would significantly expand the proportion of travel that is electrically powered. Government also needs to significantly invest in Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure and improvements to walking, cycling, and bus priority routes to unleash the true potential of what cities can achieve. Government should also engage with Core Cities on the National Aviation Strategy, part of which aims to improve sustainability.

Core Cities’ target dates for Net Zero at present. To note that Bristol and Newcastle also include a wider range of emissions.

Approx. Scope and Year of “Target”	2025	2028	2030	2035	2037	2038 “at the latest”
Council emissions	Bristol Leeds	Nottingham	Cardiff Liverpool			Manchester
City energy and transport		Nottingham	Liverpool Sheffield Birmingham	Leeds		Manchester (& GMCA)
All emissions from city energy and transport and from consumption			Bristol Newcastle Glasgow			