

Core Cities UK Cabinet Post COP Net Zero Statement

December 2025

We are immensely proud of the efforts our citizens and their communities have made towards the goal of making their cities cleaner and healthier places to live. There has been much progress, but significant barriers remain.

Over the last decade, the UK Core Cities have taken the lead on climate action, complementing government initiatives and delivering faster carbon emission reductions while ensuring a fairer transition to a net zero and climate resilient world.

Recent discussions at COP 30 in Brazil focused on the global importance of tackling climate change. This may sound distant from many of our citizens' lives, but on the ground in UK Cities Net Zero initiatives are leading to new job opportunities, improvements in infrastructure and warmer homes.

In the wake of the 2018 IPCC report which warned of a catastrophic rise in global temperatures, Core Cities, along with other local councils, set high ambitions for emissions reductions from our own operations and through services and investment into our cities.

Councils demonstrated leadership in our communities, built support and responded to citizens' concerns about climate change, achieving carbon reduction in our cities faster than the UK average.

These targets galvanised businesses and third sector organisations to take climate action now and not wait for the next generation.

Some of these ambitious targets will not be met, we simply do not have the resource or the powers we need to make that level of change, but there is a record of achievement to be proud of and our hard work will continue.

We have invested in public transport and active travel is making our cities less congested, improving air quality, public health and our economies.

City Councils continue to play a key role in climate adaptation, making sure our communities are protected from the most disruptive and dangerous effects of climate change such as heatwaves and floods.

Investment in housing and collaboration with partners is improving the energy efficiency of homes reducing bills, keeping people warm and leaving more money in people's pockets.

Core Cities UK also continues to forge relationships with business. Our 3Ci partnership with Connected Places Catapult underlined the opportunity for private sector investment and cities have been turning this into reality.

Government and its agencies need to work with us to help de-risk future investments and accelerate urban climate initiatives through its national institutions.

We remain committed to the principle of just transition. We must bring all parts of our diverse communities with us. This is where the local state is best placed to deliver, we have the knowledge and trust to work with communities to make change happen.

Meanwhile on the international stage, we welcome the UK Government's decision to sign up to CHAMP (the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships for Climate Action) last year.

There is still much to do and we remain firmly committed to the belief that it is in cities, where most people live and where knowledge and expertise tends to be concentrated, that the fight against climate change will be won. Our maxim remains true, where nations pledge it is often cities that deliver.

Core Cities UK Cabinet



Councillor John Cotton

Leader, Birmingham City Council



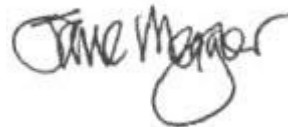
Councillor Tony Dyer

Leader, Bristol City Council



Councillor Huw Thomas

Leader, Cardiff City Council



Councillor Jane Meagher

Leader, Edinburgh City Council



Councillor Susan Aitken

Leader, Glasgow City Council



Councillor James Lewis

Leader, Leeds City Council



Councillor Liam Robinson

Leader, Liverpool City Council



Councillor Bev Craig

Leader, Manchester City Council



Councillor Karen Kilgour

Leader, Newcastle City Council



Councillor Neghat Khan

Leader, Nottingham City Council



Councillor Tom Hunt

Leader, Sheffield City Council



Lord Mayor of Belfast

Councillor Micky Murray

A range of case studies demonstrating the role Core Cities are playing in climate action can be found [here](#).