

Written evidence from Boyle

What should local authorities' roles and responsibilities in reaching net zero by 2050 be? How clear are the expectations about the role of local authorities?

Local Authorities need to have a can do attitude not excuses which at the moment there are too many loopholes that due to limited resources and experience are hampering simple solutions even being implemented. Schemes that increase emissions are not being taken into account either and at some point the Council will have to include these as public pressure grows on them. The UK100 APPG Sustainable Finance webinar I attended explored what the 'real economy' outcomes of green finance can be and how to mobilise finance into locally directed investments across our cities and regions which deliver good green jobs and low-carbon infrastructure for communities across the UK. This is the way forward not out of date HIF funding, Wiltshire Council cannot get out of the HIF consultation without loosing £5m that has been spent so far since 2018 and nothing has progressed as housing need has been achieved without the HIF. Flexibility to be able to engage and get funding through UK100 APPG Sustainable Finance is vital to achieve net zero, not just tax payers money.

What are the priorities for change or clarification to align the national planning framework with net zero?

To remove VAT and provide grants and incentives to develop brownfield sites rather than VAT only removed from greenfield sites making it more profitable to destroy biodiversity, increasing the foot print of a town rather than the quality within the existing footprint.

To better protect productive farmland grade 1 and 2 from development. To reduce the yearly housing figures from 300,000 to the 150,00 required.

Mandatory high council tax charges on all empty properties and compulsory purchases a priority to get them back into the system.

Airbnbs to be properly licenced, they are taking properties out of the system and making more profit by them being occupied for a week by holiday makers rather than a month by true residents obscuring the market.

Investments should be in green technologies not housing for pension pots, tax needs to be changed to emphasis this so local residents aren't priced out of the area, it's not just NHS workers, shop staff and every service needs local people to be able to afford to live in the area they work for net zero to be achieved. A home is a necessity not a luxury for greed.

Second homes also need to be higher taxed and phased out if we are to achieve net zero.

Supporting local economies through hotel use is much more efficient than second homes and airbnbs etc. The delay until 2025 for net zero housing is going to put pressure on Local Government for retrofitting those that cannot afford it, this is madness after the latest IPCC report.

What will need to be in place to ensure that the UK infrastructure bank loans to local authorities for net zero work are as effective as possible?

The UK100 APPG Sustainable Finance, including employing the correct people to get it into the system and use it efficiently with qualified ecologists and other officers. Currently only 1

in 5 Local Governments have an Ecologist, we need to tie it all up so we are providing the university degrees through council jobs blending work and qualifications, repeating this through all the relevant required roles.

What funding and resources are available for local authority work on net zero, and what are the priorities for improving local authority funding?

The problem is for reinstating train stations, electric buses and bus funding time is being wasted pitting one council against another when they all need the money to reach net zero, through the UK100 APPG Levelling up fund the money is there and needs the mechanism to get to the local governments, not pitting them against each other wasting time. Our local train station we are trying to get reopened has gone through this process numerous times over 30 years, it is on a mainline to London and ideal, scores highly on points, but because other councils have better experts to put together glossy projects we lose out every time and it is so disheartening for all (Corsham, Wiltshire), currently going through yet again and waiting for the outcome.

What should government's analysis of net zero funding to local authorities focus on in the next Spending Review? Getting the UK100 APPG levelling up funding into local government to fulfil all suitable suggested projects rather than just concentrating on limited tax payers money.

How is central government co-ordinating its engagement with local government on net zero?

From what our local government is telling us it isn't, the policies don't match the desired outcomes of net zero so our local government just blames central government, eg the out of date policies for green energy meaning a company could reduce the technology of an already approved waste to energy plant to an incinerator meaning more lorries to feed it and less energy output as the Defra Climate Change 2013 and NPS 2011 policies were inadequate. So if they didn't approve it they would be appealed and charged (Westbury Wiltshire, now waiting for Robert Jenrick to decide if he will call it in along with many other incinerators up and down the country). Not having the correct policies in place wastes time and money and means net zero will not be achieved, we have seen from the pandemic policies can be changed quicker and this is what we need to address the climate emergency and reach net zero efficiently.

What role can local community groups play in helping local authorities achieve their net zero ambitions?

Local groups like Wiltshire Climate Alliance bring all the groups across Wiltshire together to work with Wiltshire Council but all Wiltshire Council say even for the most basic things is "it's difficult", not lets do the easy little things and get started building a relationship as so many people are members of Wiltshire Climate Alliance and spend their time working together to get the best for their towns.

Together we can achieve it sooner. Residents and groups I belong to are pushing hard at local government as we want to see change and given a joint up approach we could achieve it. One example is the unbelievable position local government has been put in with unsustainable inefficient housing. Houses under labour would have been net zero in 2016,

under the Conservatives at present it will not be until at least 2025 meaning unacceptably high energy bills for residents, not a solar panel in sight on new builds while companies like Persimmon homes profits go up from £1.6bn to £1.8bn, local authorities are taking a lot of flack on this, but because central government is not giving the policies the urgency to see any change even in solar panels on new houses it doesn't give the impression local or central government accept we are in a climate emergency which means other doubters are justified in their opinions.

Green homes grants also need to be reintroduced and include solar panels, when residents see what they can achieve through creating and saving their own energy it has a knock on effect so together we can get to net zero. At the moment all we see is solar farms and battery storage destroying the countryside, our bills going up and profit for renewable energy going to shareholders not residents who are in fuel poverty, we need to empower people like myself to be able to make a difference not letting it only be for the wealthy to afford solar panels and play their part in reaching net zero. The current scheme with petrol E10 where people are being taxed who can't afford up to date cars from 2011 is also unacceptable, tax the people with new inefficient cars who choose them, not people who don't have a choice.

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