



Local Net Zero Forum

Update by Sam Dennis

Terms of reference and purpose

- Section 4V of the **Net Zero Strategy** - Local Climate Action - states that Government will *'Build on existing engagement with local actors by establishing a **Local Net Zero Forum** to bring together national and local government senior officials on a regular basis to discuss policy and delivery options on Net Zero'*.
- The aim of the Local Net Zero Forum (LNZF) will be to improve engagement between central and local government on net zero, to support clearer delivery roles and expectations for local government, and to discuss how local government can show place leadership on Net Zero. The LNZF will provide a better gateway for local government into the UK Government on strategic net zero issues.

Net Zero Forum Membership

- The LNZF will cover England only and be chaired by BEIS.
- Government membership will be cross-departmental, with senior-level representation in each Department.
- Local government membership will also be at senior level, representing different local government organisations and a cross-section of local authority functions.
- BEIS will provide the secretariat.

Workstreams

- **Work Area 1: Expectations of the role(s) and responsibilities of local government in relation to net zero** – Glynn Humphries, Corporate Director Communities, Environment and Climate change, Wakefield Council – ghumphries@wakefield.gov.uk
- **Work Area 2: Data, metrics and reporting** – Samantha Dennis , Director of Public Protection and Streetpride, Derby City Council Samantha.Dennis@derby.gov.uk
- **Work Area 3: Funding Local Net Zero** – John Harrison John Harrison, Executive Director for Finance, Commercialisation & S151 Officer John.Harrison@southampton.gov.uk

Role and responsibilities work stream

- The issue is complex because local authorities have different powers and responsibilities depending on their statutory nature (e.g. whether Mayoral Combined Authority, Unitary, County, District or Town/Parish Council- and whether or not a formal devolution deal is in place) and different needs and opportunities depending on their characteristics (e.g. whether city, town, industrial area, rural area etc).
- Local authorities also have a great deal of autonomy. Different local authorities take different approaches to the operational delivery of net zero,

Task and finish group discussion

- Net zero responsibilities that already exist for **all** local authorities (e.g responsibility for managing their estates);
- Net zero responsibilities that already exist for **some** local authorities depending on their nature/function (e.g. how planning functions are carried out);
- Net zero roles/responsibilities that local authorities are choosing to undertake;
- How local authorities are showing place leadership on net zero;
- Opportunities for synergy between net zero roles/responsibilities and other local authority roles/responsibilities;
- Future partnership: how best to build on existing work to develop the partnership between central and local government and enable more effective collaboration between the two sectors.

Data and metrics

- Task and finish group to explore issues around local government data, reporting and metrics on net zero activity, and to make recommendations on next steps
- Local authorities and businesses have different approaches to reporting activities so difficult to develop a clear and accurate picture of local needs and opportunities.
- This task and finish group aims to look at the data that is available, how it can be improved, how to develop more consistency and transparency in reporting
- Work will be fed into DLUC's developing plan for the new Office of Local Government

Task and finish group discussion

- Local government does not have a statutory duty to deliver net zero and the Net Zero Strategy. No mandatory requirements except under the Home Energy Conservation Act
- The single data list (available here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/single-data-list>) provides details of all data reporting requirements that are currently placed on local government by central government. The list is reviewed and updated annually.
- Within the single data list there are not many reporting requirements directly related to net zero, although there are some relevant themes, for instance around planning permissions and bus usage. There are some indicators relating to climate adaptation, such as flooding. There are others relating to wider environment, air pollution, and waste.

National data sets

- National data sets which may be relevant to local net zero initiatives are primarily sectoral. For example, fuel poverty rate by local authority or domestic energy intensity by property type.
- Total greenhouse gas emissions for each LA are published annually, broken down by sub-sector, by gas, and per capita. These are disaggregated from national data using a mix of averages and activity data, as opposed to reflecting data collected at the local level. Therefore, they do not capture the impacts of all local emissions reduction initiatives.

Next steps

- a. **Support for local authorities to report on their estate emissions:** this work will be done through the development of policy and guidance for public sector emissions monitoring, reporting, and target-setting, as per the Net Zero Strategy commitment to help ensure the public sector take a consistent and coherent approach, and that they have the appropriate information and incentives to decarbonise
- b. **Use of national datasets to support local authorities reporting of local authorities' area emissions:** to avoid increasing the burden on local authorities to collect additional data we committed to exploring how to leverage existing national data sets and work to improve accuracy, granularity, and potentially shorten time lag of the data so it can be of better use to both local authorities and national government.
- c. **It was recommended that the task and finish group take forward the following work:**
 - i. To develop a better understanding of how Local Authorities could benefit from having access to commercial level energy data, and how to best to engage with actors who hold this data.
 - ii. To develop a better understanding of the kind of data that local authorities need to better plan and monitor progress towards net zero, specifically for Local Area Energy Planning.

Questions

