

Locally Determined Contributions (LDC)



Partner Project Proposal

Why this moment matters

The UK's net zero commitments depend on the actions of local authorities, yet there is currently no consistent, credible or scalable framework for aligning local delivery with national climate ambition. Although successive national plans recognise the 'essential role' of local authorities, the system offers no standardised approach for setting evidence-based local targets, integrating climate governance across institutions, or reporting progress toward national goals.

This gap has become a critical barrier to achieving legally mandated climate targets and a source of confusion and uncertainty for policymakers, investors and communities.

At the same time, recent Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), including those of Brazil and the UK, increasingly highlight the importance of place-based delivery. Yet globally, the practical

frameworks needed to realise this potential simply do not exist

The Centre for Climate Engagement (CCE), working with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough authorities, has developed the first replicable, scalable methodology for Locally Determined Contributions (LDC). Now, CCE is seeking partners to support a full real-world trial and refinement process that can catalyse national adoption and international uptake.

The LDC project is the flagship initiative within the Centre for Climate Engagement's Policy for Climate Action Programme. The programme supports governments at all levels to translate climate ambition into deliverable policy and governance frameworks, and sits alongside CCE's Law and Engagement programmes within the University of Cambridge.

This project represents a unique opportunity to shape the future of climate governance, in the UK and globally.

LDC project: a place-based approach to climate action designed to align local efforts with national and international net zero commitments.

“For years, local authorities have been asked to deliver on climate targets without the tools to link their actions to national commitments. The LDC project finally fills that gap. By trialling and refining this framework with partners, we can create a model that is practical, replicable and capable of reshaping climate governance from the ground up.”

*Dr Paul Jefferiss, Director,
Centre for Climate Engagement*



The opportunity

The Locally Determined Contributions (LDC) project is the flagship initiative within CCE's Policy for Climate Action Programme, which supports governments at all levels to translate climate ambition into deliverable action. CCE and its local authority partners have already developed the core LDC methodology and toolkit. The next step, and the one that unlocks national and international adoption, is to test the full process in practice through real-world pilots.

This project will deliver:

- A complete LDC for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region
- One to two additional pilot case studies in other local authorities
- A refined, demonstrated methodology suitable for replication across the UK and internationally
- A publicly accessible, updated online toolkit
- National and international dissemination, including a parliamentary engagement event
- Clear evidence to inform UK government policy, Local Government Reform (LGR), and the next UK NDC

This pilot phase fills the critical gap between a promising concept and a nationally scalable solution.

IMPACT:

The Locally Determined Contributions (LDC) Framework

CCE's LDC framework is reshaping how local authorities plan and deliver climate action by aligning local plans with national climate objectives. Piloted with councils across the UK and supported by Innovate UK, the framework is now positioned for national rollout and international replication. It offers a scalable model for improving local climate governance and ensuring that local and national climate ambitions reinforce one another.

What we aim to achieve together

The LDC project aims to transform how climate action is planned and delivered across the UK by closing the long-standing gap between national targets and local implementation. Local authorities are responsible for a significant portion of emissions-related decisions, yet they currently lack a consistent, evidence-based process for aligning their actions with the UK's net zero commitments. This absence of coherence undermines national progress, creates uncertainty for investors and communities, and produces uneven outcomes across regions.

By trialling the LDC methodology through real-world pilots, we will demonstrate how local ambition can be translated into clear, science-based pathways that reflect local context while aligning with national expectations. The project will show how LDCs strengthen governance, support transparent decision making and provide a credible basis for delivery planning and reporting.

Through partnership, we aim to:

1. Create the UK's first fully operational LDCs, beginning with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and producing additional case studies that demonstrate applicability across different authority types.
2. Provide local authorities with practical clarity, enabling them to set targets, understand influence, coordinate across sectors and communicate ambition with confidence.
3. Strengthen the national climate system by generating consistent, comparable outputs that support government oversight, resource allocation and future policy development.
4. Improve investor, stakeholder and public confidence by giving communities and markets a transparent line of sight between local actions and national climate goals.
5. Support local government reform and future NDC development, ensuring that place-based delivery can be embedded into evolving governance structures and national commitments.

Together, these goals will produce a credible, replicable foundation for accelerating climate action at scale, in the UK and internationally.

Our approach

CCE will produce policy briefings, and convene a parliamentary event, and targeted sessions working in partnership with UK100. We will continue to engage internationally with networks such as ICLEI and the global CHAMP dialogues. We will work to embed LDCs within ongoing climate governance reform and promote their integration into national and international climate planning.

The project will follow a structured 'test, refine, share' methodology designed to ensure credibility and scalability.

1. Test and validate in real-world settings

While elements of the LDC toolkit have been explored individually, no local authority has yet used the full process end-to-end. This project fills that gap. Working closely with pilot authorities, we will develop a complete LDC that reflects local capabilities, governance structures, data realities and delivery pathways.

2. Refine through iterative learning

Integrated pilots will reveal where the methodology needs adjustment. CCE will document lessons, refine the toolkit, and ensure that the process is both rigorous and practical for authorities with varying levels of capacity.

3. Build demonstration case studies

Case studies for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and at least one additional authority will provide tangible models for others to adopt, helping overcome hesitancy and knowledge gaps.

4. Update and expand the online toolkit

Refinements will be incorporated into an updated, free-to-use toolkit, enabling immediate dissemination and future scaling.

5. National and international dissemination

CCE will convene policy briefings, a parliamentary event, and targeted sessions with UK100, ICLEI, CHAMP and other networks to embed LDCs within ongoing climate governance reform and promote their integration into national and international climate planning.

Outputs

The LDC project will produce a clear set of tangible, scalable outputs designed to validate the methodology, support real-world adoption and build political, technical and public understanding of the LDC approach.

1. A full LDC for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

This will be the first complete operational model of its kind in the UK, demonstrating how a region can translate national targets into local pathways, governance structures and delivery plans.

2. Case studies in 1–2 additional pilot areas

These case studies will illustrate how the LDC process works in different local contexts, creating practical examples that other authorities can follow.

3. An updated, free-to-use online toolkit

Refinements from the pilots will be incorporated into a clearer, more intuitive resource that includes guidance, templates and tools accessible to all local authorities.

4. Policy briefings and advocacy materials

These will capture lessons from the pilots and make the case for integrating LDCs into national climate governance and Local Government Reform.

5. A parliamentary engagement event

This event will bring national stakeholders together to showcase findings, highlight the benefits of LDCs and build momentum for wider adoption.

6. National and international dissemination

CCE will partner with UK100 and others to promote uptake in the UK and engage internationally with key networks such as ICLEI and the CHAMP process to share learning.

7. A strengthened evidence base for national and international alignment

The project will generate the practical evidence needed to embed LDCs into national climate planning, the next UK NDC and international climate governance frameworks

Impact

By establishing a robust, replicable approach to place-based climate delivery, this project aims to deliver impact at multiple levels:

Nationally, it provides the foundation for a consistent, science-based approach to local climate governance, supporting coherence between local and national ambitions and helping councils withstand political, financial and legal uncertainty.

Internationally, it offers a model for integrating subnational delivery into NDCs, a gap recognised in climate governance worldwide.

Economically, clearer local targets and delivery pathways improve investor confidence, reduce programme risk and enable more strategic climate investment.

Socially, the framework offers communities clearer visibility of how local action contributes to national goals, improving fairness, trust and public engagement.

Politically, it enables government oversight and supports levelling up by giving under-resourced regions the tools needed to articulate and deliver climate ambition.

Why partner with CCE

Partnering with the Centre for Climate Engagement (CCE) means investing in an organisation uniquely placed to turn climate research into practical, actionable solutions for government, business and communities. As the originators of the LDC framework, CCE is the only institution currently equipped to lead its development from a promising concept into a nationally scalable tool for climate delivery.

CCE brings together the expertise of the University of Cambridge with trusted relationships across local authorities, national policymakers and global climate governance networks. Our Policy for Climate Action Programme already works closely with councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and collaborates with partners such as the British Academy, ICLEI and UK100, creating a direct pathway from pilot projects to national influence.

Our position within Hughes Hall's strategy ensures that the LDC project is grounded in world-leading research, while our practitioner networks ensure solutions reach the people responsible for delivery. This combination

of academic depth, policy understanding and real-world access is what makes CCE a trusted bridge between insight and implementation.

By partnering with CCE, you will help establish a model that strengthens climate governance, improves public trust, increases investor confidence and creates consistency across regions. You will also support a UK-led innovation with growing international relevance, contributing to a project that has the potential to shape national climate policy and future NDC development.

This partnership is an opportunity to support system-wide transformation at a moment when credible, place-based climate action has never been more urgently needed. By supporting the LDC project, partners contribute to a wider programme of policy innovation within CCE, helping ensure that lessons from this work inform national and international climate governance.

Investment requirements and partner benefits

Funding Need: Multi-year support to cover staff capacity, pilot delivery, technical refinement, analysis, toolkit development, convening, dissemination and evaluation.

Partners will receive:

- Recognition across all toolkit outputs and events
- Participation in policy discussions and dissemination activities
- Opportunities to shape the future direction of the LDC framework
- Visibility within national and international climate governance networks
- Tailored impact reporting and engagement with project leadership

Contact

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