

Call for Partnerships

2026



Policy Programme Proposal

Why this moment matters

Climate policy is entering a defining period. Physical climate impacts continue to intensify, yet political, economic and cultural headwinds across the UK and internationally are weakening commitment to climate ambition. Delivering national and local climate goals now requires not only better policies, but better governance frameworks, stronger evidence, clearer public consent, and practical tools that decision makers can use in rapidly evolving contexts.

Within this context, climate policy and governance have become the critical pressure points. National targets increasingly depend on local delivery, institutional coordination and public consent, yet policy frameworks have not kept pace with these demands. The Policy for Climate Action Programme exists to close this gap, focusing on how climate ambition is translated into workable, legitimate and durable policy outcomes.

Across every level of government, policymakers face a shared challenge: how to turn climate goals into deliverable, affordable, publicly supported and institutionally coherent action. At the same time, emerging issues—local government reform (LGR), devolved energy decision making, resilience planning, the politicisation of climate action, and the need for new narratives—demand urgent attention.

The Centre for Climate Engagement (CCE) exists precisely to translate academic insight into real-world policy solutions. As part of Hughes Hall's Law Strategy and one of the College's Bridge Initiatives, CCE connects world-class research on climate law and policy to the people responsible for implementing change. This programme—the Policy for Climate Action Programme—is the engine through which CCE supports policymakers to navigate complexity, strengthen climate delivery, and shape the systems that govern climate action.

But the work is at risk. CCE's current funding runs only until August 2026, and full delivery of the 2025–2028 strategy requires £700,000 per year, of which the Policy Programme forms a core component. New partnerships are now essential to secure and expand this work.

“Effective climate policy depends on strong evidence, clear frameworks and public trust. Our Policy Programme provides all three. With the support of our partners, we can equip governments and communities to deliver meaningful climate action when it matters most.”

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



The opportunity

The Policy for Climate Action Programme aims to increase the scope, reach and impact of CCE's policy work, helping governments at national, regional and local levels make decisions that accelerate climate action and strengthen governance. Over the next three years, our objectives are to:

- Embed robust, replicable frameworks for local delivery of national climate targets, including through the enhancement and scaling of the Locally Determined Contributions (LDC) framework;
- Investigate and support solutions to emerging governance challenges, such as devolved energy decision making and local government reform;
- Develop new climate narratives that build public consent and legitimacy for ambitious national and local climate action;
- Expand the programme to address broader policy and governance questions, from resilience to competitiveness to institutional design;
- Strengthen climate literacy and confidence among policymakers and practitioners, enabling informed decision making during moments of intense political scrutiny.

These objectives are aligned with CCE's broader strategy, which recognises that climate governance requires integrated action across law, policy, organisational behaviour and public legitimacy.

Our flagship project: Locally Determined Contributions (LDCs)

A central element of the Policy for Climate Action Programme is the Locally Determined Contributions (LDC) framework, which serves as the programme's flagship initiative for strengthening place-based climate delivery.

Developed in partnership with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough authorities and supported by Innovate UK, the LDC Framework offers the first systematic, replicable approach for aligning local climate action with national and international climate targets. At a time when UK policy places increasing responsibility on local authorities but provides limited tools or clarity, the LDC provides a scientifically grounded, governance-ready framework for delivering climate ambition.

CCE now proposes a major expansion:

- Trialling the full process through real-world pilots in Cambridgeshire and 1–2 additional authorities;
- Refining and enhancing the methodology and toolkit based on real-world testing;
- Incorporating adaptation and resilience into the framework;
- Working with partners such as DESNZ, UK100, ICLEI and the British Academy to mainstream LDCs across the UK and internationally;
- Supporting local government reform processes, enabling new authorities to adopt robust, integrated approaches to climate governance.

As a flagship project, the LDC initiative is a core partner opportunity: it represents a nationally scalable solution that positions the UK as a global leader in place-based climate action.

Our broader policy programme: Supporting decision makers across the climate landscape

The Policy Programme addresses a suite of interconnected governance challenges that directly affect the delivery of climate ambition. Key areas of work include:

1. Devolved Energy Decision Making

The UK's emerging energy landscape is increasingly decentralised, yet mechanisms for aligning devolved decisions with national climate goals remain unclear. Building on LDC insights, CCE will explore governance models, institutional responsibilities and policy coordination structures to enable coherent, efficient and equitable energy decision making.

2. New Climate Narratives for Public Consent

Political and media narratives are shaping public attitudes toward climate action. CCE will work with partners such as CISL and Zeroldeas to create new prosperity-focused narratives that highlight multi-benefits, counter backlash, and build public legitimacy for action.

3. Adaptation, Resilience and Competitiveness

Working with partners including the Seoul Institute, UN Habitat, WEF and C40, we will develop guidance enabling cities to strengthen resilience and compete globally for investment, talent and sustainable economic opportunity.

4. Timely Policy Insight and Guidance

CCE produces rapid, evidence-based policy insight on evolving issues including:

- Consultation responses
- Devolved governance
- Corporate culture & climate
- ESG backlash
- UK climate policy progress
- COP outcomes

These briefings provide real-time intelligence for policymakers navigating fast-moving climate and governance debates.

5. Capacity Building for Policy Professionals

Through partnerships with Hughes Hall faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and international networks, CCE equips policy professionals with the understanding needed to make climate-informed decisions. This includes training, knowledge exchange, events, and bespoke briefings.

Together, these initiatives form a comprehensive programme supporting climate decision making at every level of governance.

How we work

CCE's approach reflects its institutional theory of change:

- Connecting researchers and policymakers through networks that span academia, local government, national authorities, and international organisations.
- Creating frameworks, narratives and governance solutions that respond to real-world needs.
- Convening roundtables, workshops, and seminars that bring diverse expertise into constructive dialogue.
- Communicating insights through free-to-use tools, targeted briefings and accessible analysis.
- Capacity-Building, enabling policymakers to confidently apply climate considerations in their work.

This model ensures that research is not merely published, but implemented, tested and embedded in governance practice.

Impact

Transforming Local Climate Governance in the UK

The LDC Framework has already reshaped how local governments conceptualise their climate responsibilities. Developed with authorities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and supported by Innovate UK, it offers a governance-ready model that aligns local and national climate ambition. Its next phase of testing and scaling has the potential to transform climate delivery nationwide.

Strengthening Climate Policy Narratives

CCE's partnerships with CISL, the British Academy and Zeroldeas are supporting the development of new prosperity-focused narratives capable of winning public consent for ambitious climate action, which is a critical factor in the success of national and local climate policy.

Influencing National Climate Policy Through Evidence-Based Frameworks

CCE's policy work has directly informed national climate debates by providing decision makers with credible, research-backed frameworks at moments of policy uncertainty. Through consultation responses, policy briefings and parliamentary engagement, CCE has helped clarify how national climate ambition can be translated into deliverable governance structures. This work has been cited in UK parliamentary debates and government responses, demonstrating CCE's ability to shape policy discourse beyond academia and into legislative and executive decision making.

Supporting Policy Innovation During Local Government Reform

Local Government Reform (LGR) represents one of the most significant shifts in subnational governance in decades, with major implications for climate delivery. CCE has been working at the intersection of climate policy and institutional reform to ensure that net zero ambitions are not lost during restructuring. By analysing how governance change affects climate responsibilities, and by developing tools such as the LDC framework that can be adapted to new institutional boundaries, CCE is helping policymakers navigate reform while strengthening climate action.

Building Public Consent Through New Climate Narratives

CCE's Policy Programme recognises that policy success depends not only on technical design, but on public legitimacy. In partnership with organisations such as the British Academy, CISL and Zeroldeas, CCE has contributed to the development of new climate narratives that foreground prosperity, fairness and the costs of inaction. This work supports policymakers seeking to build durable public consent for climate policy at a time of increasing political polarisation and climate backlash.

Why partner with CCE

Partnering with the Centre for Climate Engagement is an opportunity to invest in the systems that determine whether climate ambition succeeds or fails. CCE works where many climate initiatives struggle: at the intersection of research, policy design, governance and delivery.

Few organisations combine CCE's access to world-leading academic expertise with its deep engagement in real-world policymaking. As part of Hughes Hall and the University of Cambridge, CCE is able to draw on cutting-edge research across law, economics, politics, climate science and organisational behaviour — and translate it into guidance that policymakers can actually use.

CCE is also a trusted, neutral convenor. Governments, local authorities, researchers and civil society partners engage with CCE because it provides a credible space for evidence-based discussion, free from partisan or commercial agendas. This allows difficult policy questions — from devolved energy governance to local climate delivery and public consent — to be addressed constructively.

For partners, supporting CCE means backing an organisation with a proven ability to:

- Develop practical policy frameworks that move beyond aspiration to delivery
- Influence national and subnational climate governance at critical moments
- Equip policymakers with tools that reduce risk, improve coordination and build confidence
- Scale solutions nationally and internationally through trusted networks
- Strengthen democratic legitimacy for climate action through better narratives and transparency

Partnership with CCE is therefore not simply philanthropic support; it is a strategic investment in the capability of governments to deliver climate action effectively, fairly and at scale.

Partner benefits

- Strategic engagement with CCE leadership and programme teams
- Visibility across programme outputs, policy briefings and events
- Inclusion in national and international dissemination activities
- Opportunities to co-curate policy roundtables and consultations
- Tailored impact reporting demonstrating how support drives change
- Early insights into emerging policy issues and research

What your support enables

Your support enables the Policy for Climate Action Programme to function as a delivery engine for climate governance, turning research insight into tools, frameworks and guidance that policymakers can deploy immediately.

In practical terms, partnership funding allows CCE to:

Support the **trial, refinement and scaling of the Locally Determined Contributions (LDC) framework**, including real-world pilots, toolkit development, and national and international dissemination. This ensures that local climate delivery is aligned with national ambition and supported by credible governance structures.

Develop **new policy frameworks and governance guidance** in response to emerging challenges such as devolved energy decision making, local government reform, and climate adaptation and resilience. These are areas where policy gaps currently create uncertainty and slow progress.

Produce **timely, evidence-based policy insight** — including consultation responses, rapid briefings and analysis — that helps decision makers navigate fast-moving political and regulatory environments.

Convene **high-level policy dialogues, roundtables and workshops** that bring together policymakers, researchers and practitioners to co-design solutions to complex governance challenges.

Build **policy capacity and confidence** by equipping civil servants, local authority leaders and policy professionals with the knowledge and tools needed to integrate climate considerations into everyday decision making.

Sustain the **core expertise and infrastructure** that makes this work possible, including staff capacity, research translation, stakeholder engagement, communications and programme coordination.

This proposal sets out opportunities for programme-level partnership within CCE, with the option to support flagship projects, such as LDC, or broader thematic policy work.

The Policy Programme is a central pillar of CCE's wider strategy, which requires £700,000 per year to deliver in full. Programme-level support ensures that this work remains responsive, credible and scalable at a moment when effective climate governance is both urgently needed and increasingly contested.

Contact

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