Rising to the Climate Challenge

The Role of Counties in Delivering Net-Zero

CCN
COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

COUNTIES
LEADING **RECOVERY**
DELIVERING **RENEWAL**

Foreword

The impacts of climate change are vividly being felt and seen around the world. The average temperature at the end of November across the Arctic was 12 degrees Fahrenheit above normal. We have seen exceptional heatwaves in Siberia, fires in Australia and extreme weather events in the UK leading to increased instances of flooding, including in Cheshire East.

As David Attenborough has eloquently highlighted we are in the midst of a mass extinction of wildlife, with a potentially catastrophic loss of biodiversity. Over the last 18 months, the response to Covid-19 has shown that dramatic action is possible. We have shown that we can reduce travel, change the way we work and make more use of local businesses.

County Councils Network (CCN) members have recognised the challenge and have declared climate emergencies. My own authority, Cheshire East Council, has adopted a Carbon Action Plan which outlines how we will become carbon neutral by 2025 – one of the most ambitious targets in the country.

To date, though, much has been written on the role local government has in reducing climate change but not on the specific challenges facing county areas. This report aims to highlight these – as well as the opportunities.

As this report reveals, CCN member areas account for 53% of all emissions in England, yet the climate change funding so far has been concentrated on city areas. It is therefore unsurprising that CCN areas have seen slower emission reductions than city areas.

This needs to change if the government is to meet its climate change targets.
Some of the challenges can only be properly understood with local knowledge. For example, the take up of electric cars in rural areas is lower than in urban areas, despite strong public support in rural areas for climate change action. Arguably this could be down to investment in infrastructure – London has 31% of the charging points in UK (but only 15 % of the registered ULEVs), but this paper shows the reality is more complex.

CCN areas also have a key role to play, not just in reducing carbon emissions but also in helping to change agricultural practices to capture carbon. As major landowners CCN members can take a direct role in planting trees, restoring peat bogs and showcasing good agricultural practice. Many rural homes still rely on oil for heating. This provides a huge opportunity to reduce carbon emissions by leap-frogging the technology and retro-fitting these homes with insulation and modern green energy. This requires funding for locally-run, long term schemes.

In the survey of CCN councils carried out for the report, one member summed up what we are asking for as “clear and consistent policy supported by adequate funding to support communities and individuals to take personal action.”

Climate change is the greatest challenge facing our generation and CCN members have a crucial role in meeting that challenge – but they cannot do this on a shoestring. This report sets out a number of recommendations and good practice on how we can address climate change from a county perspective.

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Executive Summary

The Global Context

Climate Change is widely acknowledged as the biggest challenge the world faces in the short, medium, and long term. Governments are accelerating their plans to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions as the impacts of climate change are becoming more visible across the globe, from rising temperatures and sea levels, increased flooding and drought, to the threat of wildlife extinction. Globally the ambition has been established that we should achieve carbon net zero by 2050.

The UK is a leader in reducing GHG emissions to date. Between 2008 and 2018 the UK's emissions reduced by 28%, faster than any other G20 economy. This success has in large part been due to the successful transition to green energy production from wind and solar farms.

But globally every country needs to accelerate emission reduction programmes if we are to limit the increase in global temperature to less than 2%. As recently as April 2021, the Prime Minister committed to accelerating the pace of change in the UK by setting a target of a reduction in carbon emissions of 78% by 2035. This means that the UK will reduce emissions by 11% each year between now and 2035.

However, as the National Audit Office point out in their "Achieving Net Zero" review:

> ***"the majority of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions achieved to date have been achieved in the power sector, which required consumers to change their behaviour less than will be necessary for other sectors that need to decarbonise, such as heat and transport".***

This perspective must not be overlooked in designing the programmes that will accelerate emissions reductions in the UK. To achieve the targets set will require significant investment, but equally important, changes in the attitudes and behaviours of citizens and businesses if we are to retrofit 19 million homes, reduce care journeys by 10%, switch to electric vehicles, eat substantially less meat, recycle more, and develop our green economy.

The Role of Local Government

Local government, as the recognised leader of place, is ideally positioned to play a major role in enabling the required societal shift in attitudes and behaviours. Through local networks and partnerships, regulation, service provision, funding and communication, local government possesses the tacit knowledge that is required to influence change.

CCN member authorities cover 86% of the landmass in England, and can use this land strategically to develop exemplar zero carbon schemes. It best understands its areas through its ability to think strategically but act locally. It understands its local culture, custom and practice, practical challenges of the local environment and the attitudes towards the establishment that often create resistance rather than buy-in. The value of this knowledge has been clearly evidenced in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has recognised the importance of local government in their analysis of GHG emissions, acknowledging that 84% of territorial CO2 emissions are influenceable by local government [1]. This recognition alone suggests that local government should be fundamental to climate change action programmes. Furthermore, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), the National Audit Office (NAO), the C40 cities and many other institutions involved in climate change action have stressed the requirement for local government to be central to climate change programmes. The Committee for Climate Change [2] said "top down policies go some way to delivering change but can achieve far greater impact if they are focussed through local knowledge and networks".

A greater role for local government in designing and delivering climate change action also aligns with the Government approach to the levelling up agenda. Climate change can be used as an important catalyst for change and economic regeneration. It can achieve a multiplier effect if sufficient flexibility and funding is made available to deliver sustainable long-term change.

The Importance of Place

Accepting that local government is crucial to the successful roll out of climate change action, it is important to recognise that not all places are the same. This report sets out the opportunity for County Councils Network (CCN) member authorities to play a critical role in the delivery of climate change action but also the unique circumstances that must be understood and taken into account in designing how schemes should be delivered and funded across the country.

The 36 CCN member authorities represent nearly half of England – 46% of the population, 47% of households and 48% of businesses, and account for 53% of territorial CO2 emissions in England. These authorities present significant opportunities to accelerate climate change action due to their richness and diversity. Some authorities have large towns (150k+ population) whereas others are largely rural with a number of smaller towns; some are well connected to city economies where others are more isolated; and some are better served by public transport and others are not. This richness creates the ideal conditions to trial, learn and evolve at pace to understand what works and what doesn't. For instance, we could have seen very different results with the take up of the Green Home Grants with a more flexible approach adapted across the variety of CCN member areas. However the key issue with the Green Homes Grant is the short timescales to deliver. A more strategic, locally led, approach would deliver better results where both supply and demand can be locally managed.

As this report shows, CCN member authorities are taking positive and innovative steps to reduce emissions, yet the varied challenges in areas have resulted in slower emissions reductions than other urban and city areas:

Table 1 - CCN analysis of total local authority influenceable emissions from 2005 to 2018

Council type	Total emissions in 2005	Total emissions in 2018	Change
Core Cities	27,062,000	16,496,000	-39%
London Councils	46,267,000	28,128,000	-39%
Metropolitan boroughs and non-CCN unitaries	106,778,000	67,240,000	-37%
CCN member councils	179,057,000	124,205,000	-30%

[1]BEIS analysis of GHG emissions - https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics
[2] Committee on Climate Change sixth carbon budget - https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/

The Challenges and Opportunities of Tackling Climate Change in Counties

To date, much of the focus on climate change action has been disproportionately focused on cities and urban areas in England. This is despite county areas reducing their emissions at slower rate than the rest of the country and in particular the largest cities, as Table 1 shows. The government risks undermining its own net zero target unless it provides county areas with the funding and support that addresses the size of the challenge they face.

From our research, it is clear that the opportunities for CCN member authorities to support the acceleration of climate change action are numerous and include:

- CCN member authorities cover 86% of the landmass in England, where the majority of future growth in green energy generation, carbon offsetting, carbon sequestration and effective land management is likely to impact. Councils can play a critical role in preparing changes of land use, engaging with communities, and overcoming local obstacles, and must therefore be engaged “cradle to grave” in the delivery of expanding energy generation facilities.

- Attitudes of people that live in rural communities are more receptive to climate change initiatives than those in urban and rural areas, providing greater opportunity to accelerate initiatives and innovation.

- Almost all of agriculture emissions are accounted for in CCN member authorities that also own significant landholdings in their own right. The opportunity exits to use the local tacit knowledge in councils to engage with farming communities and landowners to better design and support changes that are sustainable for their livelihoods as well as for the environment.

- In general, people that live in rural areas are driven by a different set of values to those that live in cities. As the Attitudes & Behaviours section in this report explores, people in rural communities are more self-reliant, community focussed, and content with life as it is, and therefore in these places, councils become critical in accessing the various local networks that exist in order to influence behaviour.

- The scale of CCN member authorities as employers and economic enablers in their place enable them to be a stimulus for climate change action through procurement behaviour, supply chain stimulus and staff participation in green schemes. However, climate change action must be allowed to be co-ordinated at a local level to leverage investment.

From our research, it is clear many challenges exist for CCN member authorities that are varied:

- Average wages are lower, and businesses are smaller (20 of the county authorities have above average levels of micro businesses), meaning that investment in climate change action, whether personal or business, is more challenging and risks creating greater inequality at a time of “levelling up”.

- More people are employed in those industries that account for greater CO2 emissions, posing a greater risk to employment in the future.

- People in CCN member authorities, on average, travel further to access employment and basic services, and the time taken to use alternative forms of transport can be up to 77% longer.

- Public transport infrastructure in CCN member authorities is currently insufficient to be a viable alternative to using the car for transport. Only 15% of all bus journeys in England are in CCN areas, and where investment is decreasing at a faster rate that urban areas.

- Proportionally more vehicles (53%) are registered in CCN areas, yet only 38% of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) are registered in CCN areas. The slow roll out of charging networks, the travel distances involved, and the general attitude towards ULEVs in rural areas mean that greater challenges exist in achieving the necessary transition to electric vehicles.

- In non-unitary CCN member authorities, additional complexity exists in designing and delivering climate changes action due to the roles, responsibilities and governance arrangements of county and district councils.

- A large proportion of housing stock is remote, off gas grid, expensive to retrofit, and electricity supplies cannot always be guaranteed, making many of the required changes to reduce emissions uneconomic.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is acknowledged that globally we are in the midst of a climate emergency, and we should therefore be treating it as such. This report evidences why local authorities are critical to the success of the Government’s climate change ambitions, and why without greater recognition, involvement and investment in CCN member authorities we will miss the opportunity to accelerate emissions reduction in half of England.

This report sets out a series of conclusions and preliminary recommendations for the Government and CCN member authorities to consider, based on our research to date. Further detailed exploration of the issues will be required, including economic viability of solutions, demand side incentives and supply chain stimulus, in order to drive the agenda forwards.

Recommendations for Government

01

That the UK Government gives more clarity on the policy, strategy and obligations relating to local government and climate change. Government should create the forum for meaningful engagement with CCN member authorities to jointly define the roles, flexibilities and contributions that they can make to build on the self-made momentum and accelerate climate change action in their areas.

02

Government should move away from an overly-city focused approach, and provide the necessary amount of funding and support to county areas that addresses the size of the challenge they face. More broadly, government must set aside more funding for climate change than the £11.6bn already committed if it wants to achieve its net zero target.

03

Climate change programmes need to provide clarity of funding and certainty to the supply chain and demand side to increase the participation in action. Programmes should therefore be longer term with appropriate funds committed over the programme period to provide the confidence for businesses and citizens to invest in climate action.

04

CCN member authorities should be given greater flexibility and freedom to deliver schemes on a basis that reflects the challenges of particular communities, for example the incentives and delivery mechanisms that are needed for a coastal town like Jaywick in Essex are different to the needs of towns like Watford in Hertfordshire.

05

Government should quickly establish the mechanisms for capturing and recording the performance data (finance, emissions reductions, co-benefits, etc) to support the evaluation of what works well and that initiatives can be scaled with greater certainty.

Recommendations for CCN members

01

Climate change is an emergency and should be treated as such. Those authorities that are yet to declare a climate emergency should do so at the earliest opportunity. Those that have declared an emergency should escalate delivery of climate emergency plans. Climate change should be included in decision making processes, funds should be identified and allocated to support climate change action against which progress on emission reduction can be monitored and evaluated.

02

Given the good practice that already exists, CCN member authorities should rapidly develop a mechanism for sharing good practice and learning from trials so that all councils can accelerate change in their place.

03

Given the lack of expert resources and new skills that will need to be developed to deliver climate change action successfully, CCN member authorities should consider establishing “centres of excellence" to focus on the key areas of business and commercial, domestic, transport and agriculture emissions in order that innovation can be driven in a focussed and accelerated way for the benefit of all authorities.

1. Introduction

Accepting that local authorities are pivotal to climate change success, County Councils Network (CCN) member authority areas are an ideal lens through which to examine issues related to carbon reduction strategies. Through their geographic coverage of much of the country, they have been at the heart of place shaping locally, with many acting as the place leader. For many CCN authorities they are traditional centres of heritage, culture and community; at a very simple level they are the ‘places’ individuals identify with.

The CCN member authorities are an heterogenous mix of urban, rural, towns and villages, national parks and coastal geographies, representing some 26 million people and covering 86% of the country’s landmass. They are a vital part of the solution architecture to the climate emergency, through their responsibility for infrastructure, economic growth, stewardship of the rural environment, statutory roles in waste and recycling and providing green spaces and public places, as public service system leaders. As such, their diversity and richness mean they require different and tailored solutions to tackle the climate change agenda.

The 36 county and unitary authorities that make up the CCN have for many years been successfully working to tackle climate change. This has been through energy efficiency measures, buildings retrofit, improving land use, and promoting sustainable transport – ensuring sustainability is a key decision-making consideration. Much of this has been taken out of the necessity to mitigate the existing impact of climate change where CCN member authorities experience flooding and flood damage, drought and the impact on local environment, and the loss of our nature and wildlife habitats. These actions have been taken in response to reduced funding and the need for greater efficiency, but also to improve local services and infrastructure. For instance, by making buildings and infrastructure more energy efficient, designing better road networks that reduce traffic and road damage, embracing technology and flexible working, and also by responding to changing legislation.

Although there are many opportunities for CCN member authorities to enable the UK wide carbon reductions, they also face many and varied challenges – this report reveals that 53% of local authority influenceable emissions in England are produced in CCN member areas. The actions needed to reduce emissions in CCN member councils are more complex and have not kept pace with other areas in England. Given the scale and complexity of the challenge, CCN areas should therefore be an integral part of the climate change solution and are critical to the delivery of the targets set out by Government.

As we begin to emerge from the global COVID-19 pandemic, there has never been a more critical time to act to reverse the devastating impacts of climate change and drive a green recovery. The importance of the role of CCN member authorities, given they account for more than half of the UK CO2 emissions is framed in the context of the acceleration of action required.

Alongside new analysis of the latest carbon emissions data, this report draws on many sources including data and reports from the CCN, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Department for Transport (DfT), National Audit Office (NAO), Committee for Climate Change (CCC), UK100, C40 Cities and many other academic and professional organisations, to piece together a picture of the real different challenges faced by CCN member authorities. Additionally, a survey of CCN members was undertaken to support the research to help identify the preparedness for climate change action and the funding allocated to this agenda. Current working practices and the findings of the report have been tested with a steering group of CCN members, including:

- ADEPT
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Cheshire East Council
- Cornwall Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Suffolk County Council
- UK100
- Wiltshire Council

The evidence suggests that much consideration has been given to what needs to be done and that a broad consensus exists about what actions need to be taken including retrofitting homes, increasing the use of public transport, and the switch to electric vehicles (ULEVs). Examples of best practice can be found across the CCN member councils and some of these are included in the report.

Despite the significant efforts of CCN member councils to reduce emissions in their place, this report will begin to show that there are profound economic, social and cultural differences and challenges in the way that people live their lives in rural and CCN areas that account for the slower emissions reduction, and why that will undermine the UK's ability to deliver its net zero targets. It will also show that the focus on cities and urban areas will further weaken the ability to reduce emissions in those areas where emissions are greatest – CCN member areas.

The report also highlights the immense opportunities and possibilities our authorities hold if given the correct levers and funding. The size and scale mean they are the natural leaders of place and are positioned to assist central government to help them achieve their carbon reduction targets.

The report concludes with a series of preliminary recommendations that will enhance the ability of CCN member authorities to deliver climate change programmes ensuring they have an appropriate voice in designing schemes and accessing funds that will be critical to success.

2. The Climate Change Context

Climate change is arguably the biggest challenge that the world faces in the short, medium, and long term. Rising temperatures and sea levels, deforestation, poor air quality, and the acute vulnerability of wildlife are visibly threatening our way of life globally, nationally, and locally.

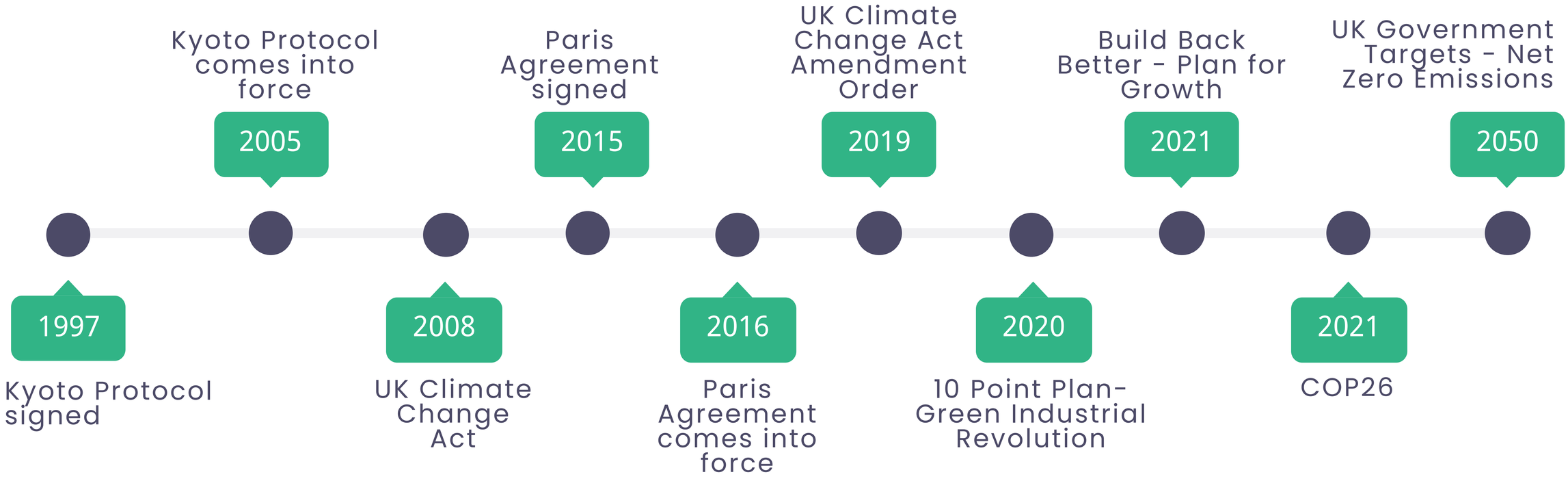
The urgency with which governments are developing strategies to tackle climate change is increasing, the challenges and commitments having been well documented from both the Kyoto Protocol, signed in 1997 and the Paris Climate Agreement signed in 2015.

In the Climate Change Act 2008, the Government set a target for the UK to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 by 80% compared with 1990 levels. Between 2008 and 2018, the UK's emissions reduced by 28%, faster than any other G20 economy.

Furthermore, in June 2019, the UK Government passed legislation accelerating the pace of emissions reductions and committing it to achieving 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It set the net zero target to deliver on the commitments it had made by signing the Paris Agreement in 2016. Aiming for net zero represents an increase in the level of ambition from the Government's previous emissions reduction target.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity for a green revolution and on 18th November 2020, the Prime Minister announced a Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. It set out the approach the UK Government will take to build back better, support green jobs, and accelerate the path to net zero[3]. The plan committed that the UK would continue to be at the forefront of tackling climate change, stating that the UK was already a world leader in clean growth.

Building on the UK's position on a global stage, the UKs Presidency of the 26th United Nations' Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) and our Presidency of the G7, the UK Government will show that it is putting tackling climate change and environmental issues at the top of the international agenda.



[3] 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution – November 2020 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936567/10_POINT_PLAN_BOOKLET.pdf

Although this global stage presents many opportunities for the UK, reducing emissions to achieve net zero will require wide-ranging changes to the UK economy, including further investment in renewable electricity generation, as well as changing the way people travel, how land is used and how buildings are heated.

The National Audit Office (NAO) [4] states that:

"achieving net zero is a colossal challenge and significantly more challenging than Government's previous target to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050. In some sectors, there are well-understood pathways to net zero but there is uncertainty in other sectors over how to reduce emissions. This is because it is not yet known how quickly some technologies will develop or how much individuals will be willing to change their behaviours."

In an aim to achieve this in the past year, the Government has published or plan to publish some 22 strategies related to climate change. The profile and urgency of this agenda and the level of news coverage is increasing day by day, and as recently as 20th April 2021 the Prime Minister committed to accelerating the reduction in carbon emissions by 78% by 2035, again an acceleration of the pace of change in the UK.

Government plans to launch a net zero strategy prior to COP26 in November 2021. The aim is that this strategy will set out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy by 2050, encompassing all the sectors that need to decarbonise. Establishing a clear strategy before COP26 is a critical step if the UK is to achieve net zero by 2050.

1997 Kyoto

UK target to reduce 1990 emissions by 12.5% by 2012

2008 UK Climate Change Act

Cut GHG emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050

2015 Paris Agreement

Limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels

2019 Amendment Order

UK Change Change 2008 amended cut GHG emissions by 100% relative to 1990 levels by 2050

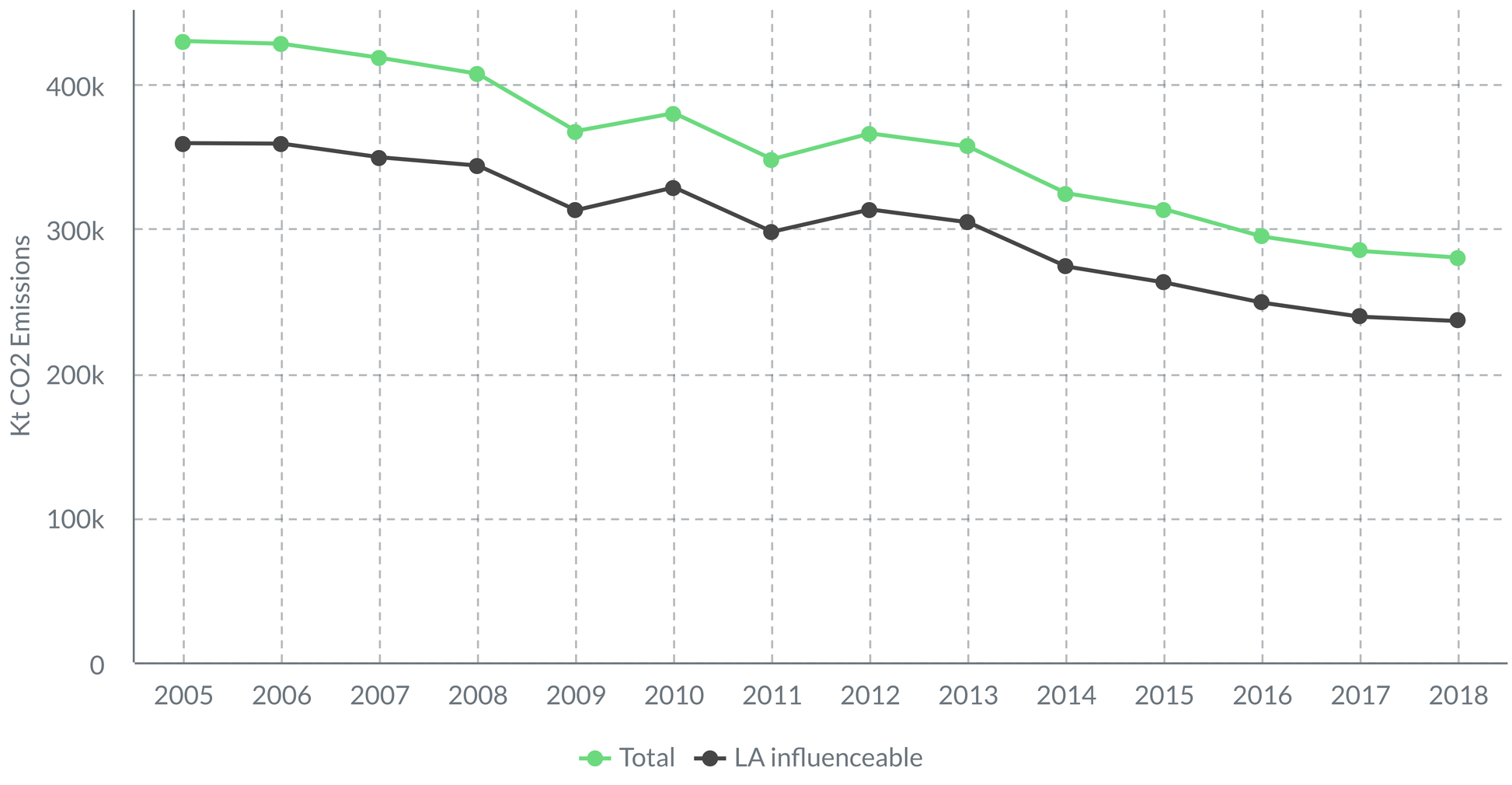
[4] National Audit Office – Achieving Net Zero – December 2020 https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Achieving-net-zero.pdf

3. The Importance of Place

There is an overwhelming argument that, taken together, the data, academic advice and alignment with government policies supports a place-based approach to climate change that recognises the unique differences and critical contributions that must encompassed within climate change delivery strategies.

BEIS data sources show that local authority territorial influenceable CO2 emissions have consistently been assessed at or around 84% of total CO2 emissions. Given the scale of emissions influenceable by local authorities, aligned to their role and connectivity with the communities they serve, local authorities should be central to the delivery of climate change action at a local level.

Graph 1 - England Territorial Emissions 2005 - 2018



Yet, the NAO states that “Government has not set out clearly the roles of public bodies outside central departments in achieving net zero. Arm’s-length bodies, regulators and local authorities all have critical roles in the achievement of net zero.”

Local authorities have no statutory responsibility or direction to deliver climate change programmes and yet they have taken responsibility to act. Across the UK, more than 300 councils have now declared a climate emergency, and many have created carbon reduction plans. The CCN survey showed that out of the respondents 80% have declared a climate emergency.

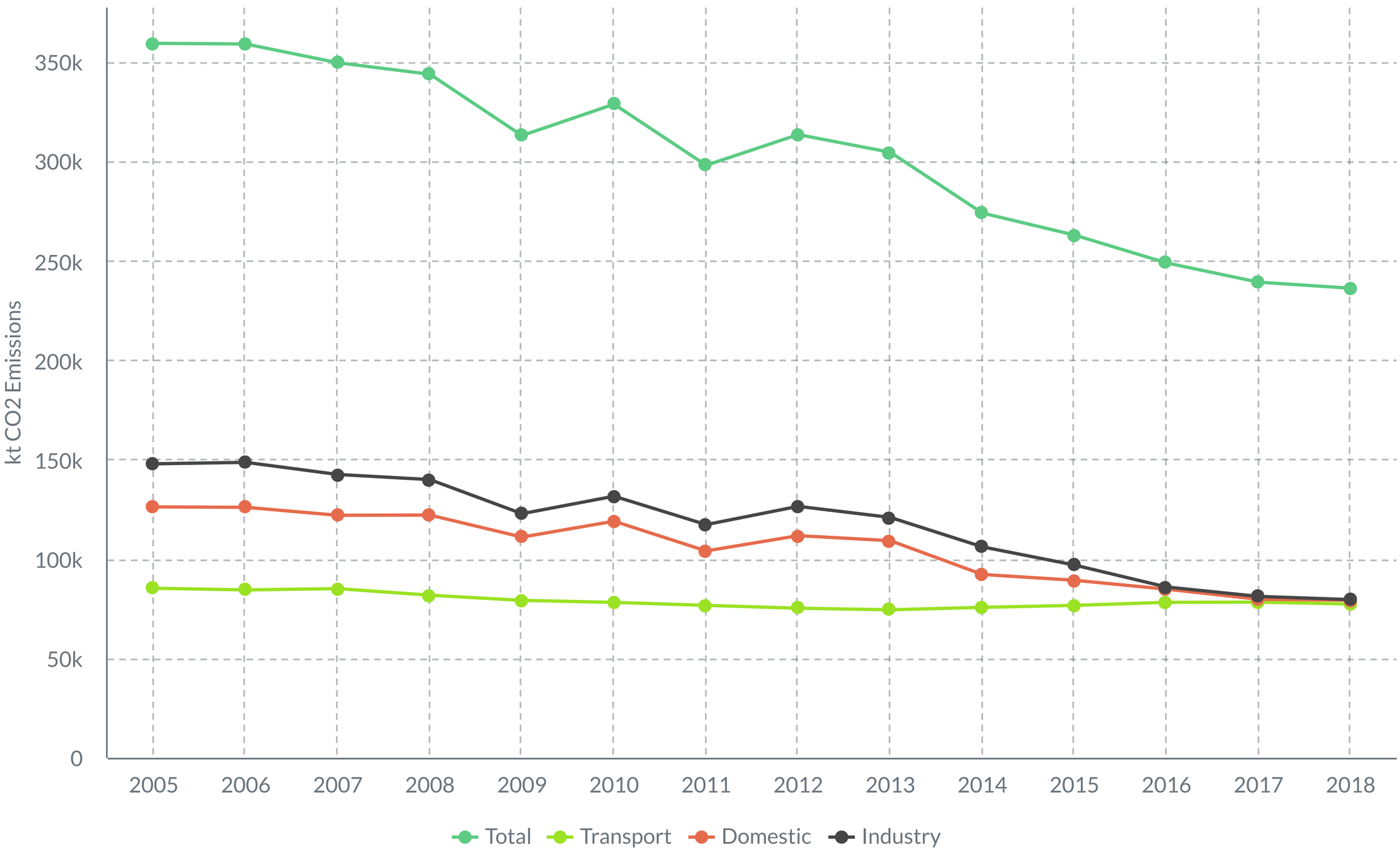
The lack of defined role and relationship with Government in respect of climate change may explain why, in the main, these plans focus on the activities and assets under the council's jurisdiction and less so on the wider "Place".

In general, these plans are relatively high level, focussing on the "what" needs to be done, rather than the "how", by when and at what cost. Preliminary analysis indicates a wide variation in both the scope and depth of these plans, with factors such as a lack of funding, skills and strategic alignment across the Government being key barriers to progress.

The CCN survey results found that 93% of the respondents have a plan to reduce greenhouse/carbon emissions in their authority. In comparison, 62% of the councils who responded said that 'partially' would best describe the extent to which their plan addressed their place-based emissions.

The NAO report also states that "local authorities will be key in the achievement of emissions reductions in the transportation and housing sectors locally where the decarbonisation challenge will vary by location." Given that domestic and transportation CO2 emissions make up two thirds of total influenceable emissions, it is essential that local government is central to the design of all initiatives in these sectors.

Graph 2 - England LA Influenceable Emissions 2005-2018



It is unlikely that a combination of Government regulation and market forces alone will be sufficient to accelerate emissions reductions, and to change citizens' and businesses decision making and behaviours will require a cohesive network of influence at a local level to deliver change.

In a document published by ADEPT and its partners in the Blueprint Coalition in January 2021 [5], the group said:

> *"Community engagement and community projects will be critical to local delivery, especially for more challenging actions such as traffic reduction and the transformation of heating. Across the country, communities are leading the way with innovative climate initiatives including nature preservation, community energy schemes, local food growing and tackling fuel poverty. Working together with local authorities, community action can achieve a great deal, but more investment, particularly development funding, is needed."*

Currently, the Government's coordination arrangements for net zero only extend to central government departments. The scale of impact that local government could have on climate change means that it should be at the heart of defining and delivering climate change action.

[5] The Blueprint Coalition brings together ADEPT (the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport), Ashden, Friends of the Earth, Grantham Institute, Green Alliance, Greenpeace, LEDNet (London Environment Directors' Network), PCAN (Place-Based Climate Action Network) and SOLACE – and backed by over 125 local authorities - Blue print for accelerating climate action and a green recovery at a local level – Jan 2021 - https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/documents/blueprint-accelerating-climate-action-and-green-recovery-local-level

Committee on Climate Change support for local government

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has published an accompanying report on the role of local authorities in delivering the UK's net zero ambition. The report aims to provide a framework for aligning climate action at the local level with the CCC's pathways for the UK, as well as recommendations for local, regional and national Government:

- That the UK Government and local authorities share a common goal to deliver Net Zero.

- That the Sixth Carbon Budget can only be achieved if Government, regional agencies, and local authorities work seamlessly together.

- That more than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions – decisions that are made at a local and individual level. Many of these decisions depend on having supporting infrastructure and systems in place. Local authorities have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas.

- Top-down policies go some way to delivering change, but can achieve a far greater impact if they are focused through local knowledge and networks.

Four key things are needed to achieve this vision of collaborative delivery:

1. Framework: An agreed framework for delivery for Net Zero incorporating local and national climate action;

2. Financing: Appropriate long-term financing to support local authorities in delivering Net Zero;

3. Flexibility: Local operational flexibility around how local areas address climate change;

4. Facilitation: coherent policy and powers for the facilitation of delivery aiming to remove barriers to delivering local climate action in the UK.

Alignment with Policy

In some aspects of policy, the Government has identified that place matters through the 'levelling up' agenda**.** It has acknowledged that many people are rooted to their local area because of its civic identity and their social and family connections: over 40% of workers have only ever worked in the same local area as they were born. But there are parts of the country where people feel left behind, that they are not getting fair access to jobs, wages and skills opportunities, and that their local priorities are not being delivered on by the Government. The levelling up agenda is mostly silent on the need to level economic disparities between different parts of the country, particularly the north and south east.

The approach to delivering net zero should equally draw on the important and complex Levelling Up initiatives being adopted by this Government and which have very clearly recognised the importance of Place.

To support this agenda, the UK Government have announced a £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund. The fund will support town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets.

In 2020, the CCN and Grant Thornton published the '*Place-Based Growth: The Role of Counties in 'Levelling-Up' England'* report highlighting the vital role that CCN member authorities have in the successful implementation of this agenda. The research showed that CCN authority areas are the places where growth will need to occur for the Government's 'levelling up' agenda to be successful.

The research found that CCN member authorities had lagged behind city/urban authorities on many of the established economic indicators, and that three key issues emerged as driving the need for place-based strategies for CCN member authorities:

1. The uniqueness of place and the rise of spatial inequality

2. The challenge of place and the need to re-think economic development

3. The relationship between place and the importance of connectivity

In addition to the Levelling Up Fund, the Government has recently launched the Community Renewal Fund prospectus 2021/22 [6] – a precursor to the Shared Prosperity Fund - seeking proposals for new and innovative schemes to come forward to deliver the levelling up agenda. The key Government policy in its introduction clearly sets out the importance of local places in rebuilding the UK economy.

Some 40% of the areas identified in the prospectus as priority areas reside within CCN member areas (including District Councils), offering the potential to gain a multiplier effect by facilitating the local prioritisation of the levelling up agenda aligned to climate change action. This would benefit both the economy and emissions reduction if the strategies can be sufficiently aligned and targeted.

This report shows that there are clear parallels between the economic growth agenda and the climate change agenda where again CCN member authorities lag behind cities and urban councils because of spatial inequalities, the economic reality of work location, and the complexity of connectivity in living day to day.

The impact of local government being on the periphery

As indicated earlier, the relationships and responsibilities between public sector bodies and Government on this agenda are not sufficiently clear. Despite the positive action being initiated by local authorities, the danger exists that we create a patchwork quilt of climate action with good practice being lost, innovation not shared, and targets not aligned and missed.

On 11 March 2021, LocalGov[7] published a report that suggested that only half of local climate change plans aim to reach net zero across the entire local area and over a third of plans focus only on emissions from local authority operations.

The CCN survey on climate change undertaken for this research indicated a more positive stance taken where CCN member authorities are taking clear responsibility for climate change action. This indicated that all respondents to the survey had acknowledged the threat of climate change and are at varying stages of planning to reach net zero for the council estate, and that 60% plan to move to net zero across the place.

[6] Community Renewal Fund Prospectus – March 2021 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus
[7] Local Gov Report – Whole Area Climate Change Targets – March 2021 - https://www.localgov.co.uk/Councils-urged-to-set-whole-area-climate-change-targets/52005

BOX 1 - CCN Survey Results

In a recent survey of CCN members, all respondent councils had declared a climate emergency with targets for carbon neutrality stretching between 2025 and 2050. 60% of respondents had targets for carbon neutrality across the place.

However, 20% of respondents were fully confident that they can deliver the outcomes of their plan. Respondents said that they were constrained by:

- Resources
- Joint working between district and county areas
- National policy and legislation relating to housing and commercial properties
- Grid constraints
- Scientific developments
- Security of supply chain

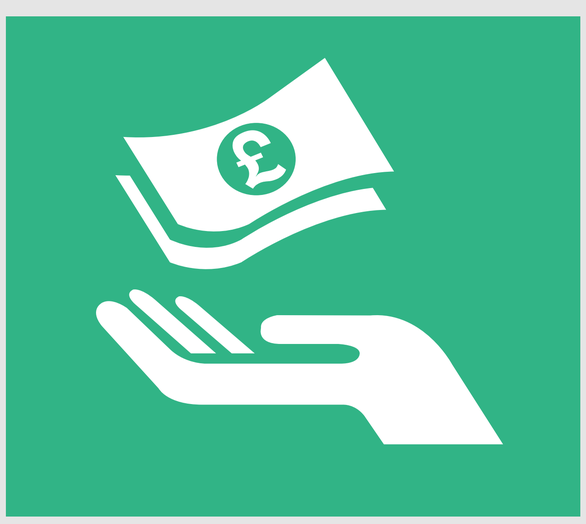
Our survey also indicated a consistency in the barriers that exist currently:

1 Clarity on roles

The role of local authorities needs to be clarified (currently local authorities have no statutory responsibility to deliver climate change) in order for them to fulfil their potential to deliver climate change action

2 Sustainable funding

Funding for programmes needs to be long term and sufficient to stimulate the supply chain (and the consumer) to engage in climate change action, particularly in less densely populated areas



3 Greater investment

Greater investment is required to develop the necessary skills and expertise that will be needed to accelerate progress over the next 10 years

Key Messages

01

The UK Government is accelerating the rate at which we must reduce CO2 emissions and that means that we must also accelerate the delivery of successful initiatives across the whole of the UK

02

There is a strong commitment to addressing climate change within local government but at this moment a disconnect exists between the aspirational targets of the UK Government and clearly understood delivery mechanism(s) that is required to achieve the necessary rate of GHG emission reduction

03

The data and academic evidence support a leading role for local authorities in the design and delivery of climate change initiatives, recognising that local authorities have the best knowledge and connectivity with their citizens and businesses to influence change

04

Government should ensure that local authorities' perspectives are incorporated into the formation of sector strategies and the overall net zero strategy; and ensure local authorities have the skills and capacity to mobilise the action that is required locally across all sectors

05

A place-based approach is likely to have a multiplier effect on the Governments investment in the "levelling up" agenda which also recognises a place-based approach is best to tackle the unique circumstances of each area

06

Government should establish a clear strategy before COP26, clearly defining what is to be achieved from the outset, together with funding availability

4. Climate Change in Counties

CCN areas account for 46% of England's population, 47% of its households and 48% of its businesses. On average in CCN areas 37% of residents live in rural areas, with a median population density of 2.8 persons per hectare, this is comparable to 60.86 for authorities in London, 42.44 for Core Cities and 26.16 for Key Cities.

Despite sharing many common characteristics, there remains diversity within the CCN member authorities that with the appropriate engagement from government can be harnessed to deliver accelerated climate change action over the next 10 years. These include:

- Single tier and two-tier governance arrangements
- Authorities with large towns (e.g. Hertfordshire) and those that have smaller towns and are largely rural (e.g. Shropshire)
- Those that are connected into city economies (e.g. Cheshire East, Essex, etc.) and those that are more isolated (e.g. Cornwall, Cumbria)
- Coastal counties and landlocked counties
- Counties that are served well by road and rail connectivity, and those that are more remote.

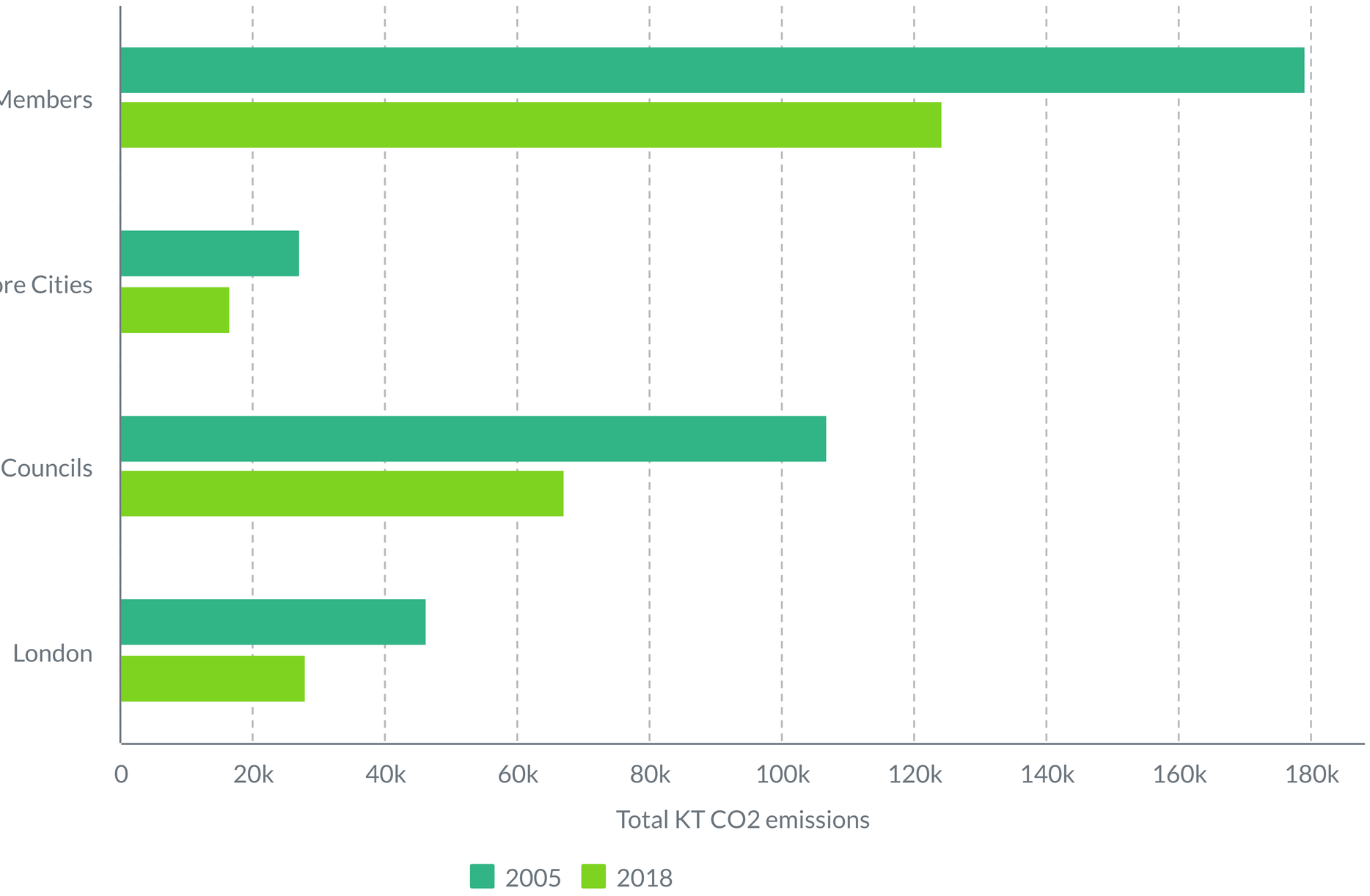
The varying landscape and economic diversity that exists provide the perfect opportunity for trials and incubator projects to design and evaluate the most effective delivery mechanisms to accelerate climate change action before rolling out at scale.

Proportionally, CO2 emissions in CCN member areas are greater than in other areas. CCN member authorities represent the largest proportion (53%) of local authority influenceable emissions in England (BEIS emissions data) relative to 47% of households. Additionally, the data shows varying rates of emissions reduction across the different types of local authority.

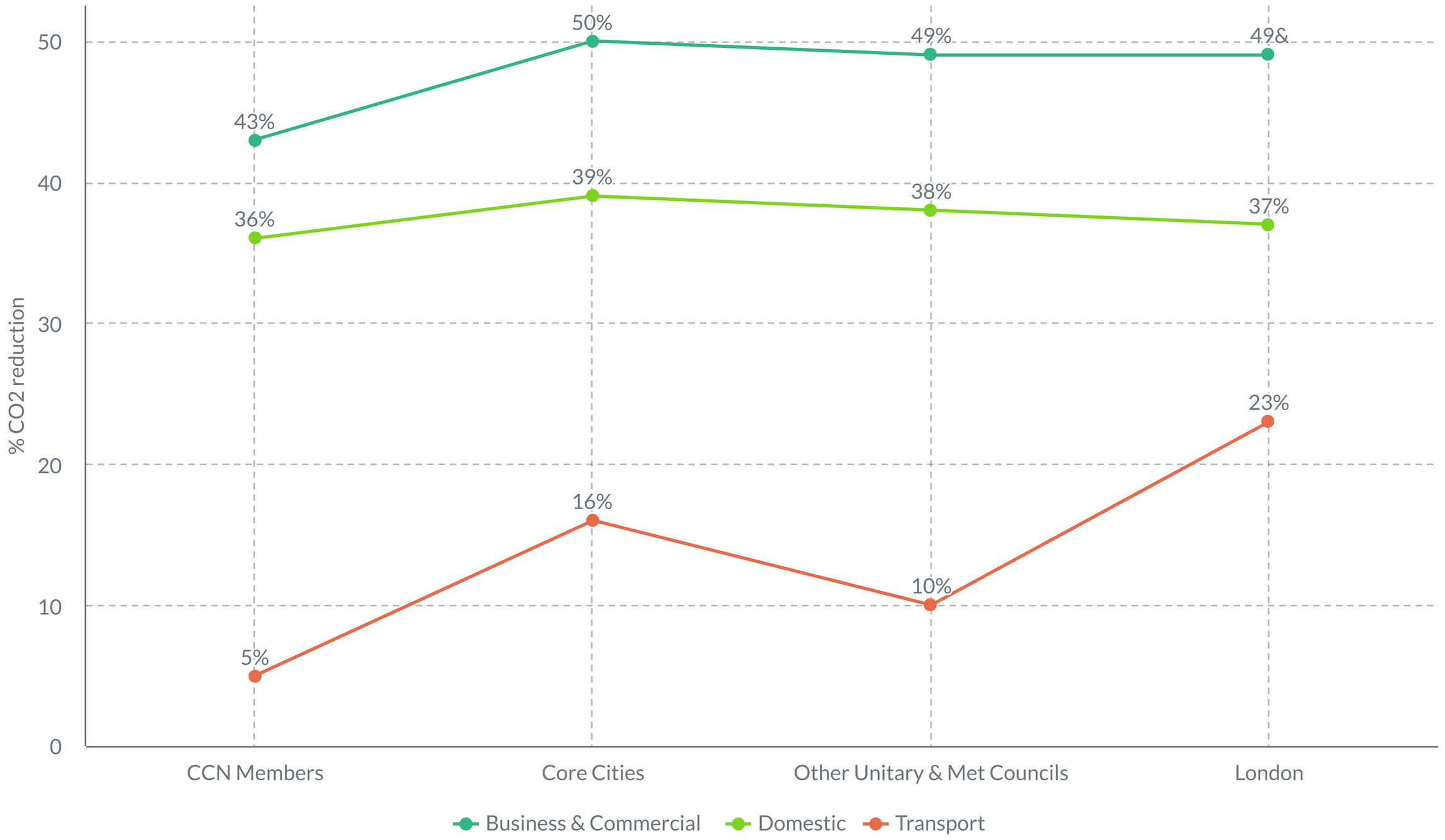
Looking at total local authority influenceable emissions in England between 2005-2018, we see an average 34% reduction, due in large part to the move to green energy sources, but this rate of reduction is not consistent across types of authority. CCN member authority emissions have on average reduced by only 30% compared to 39% in Core Cities and London.

Furthermore, by comparing the difference in the rate of emissions reduction across the established emissions categories of business & commercial, domestic, and transport we can observe that CCN member areas have a lower rate of reduction in all categories relative to other types of authority. The graph below shows how local authority emissions have reduced over the period 2005-2018 by comparing CCN areas against different types of local authority areas.

Graph 3 - Total Local Authority Influenceable Emissions 2005-2018



Graph 4 - Reduction in Local Authority Influenceable Emissions



The Committee on Climate Change has pointed out to the UK Government that the reduction of emissions becomes harder and more urgent as we grapple with reducing transport and domestic emissions, and the evidence above suggests that it is more difficult to reduce GHG emissions in CCN member authorities relative to cities and metropolitan areas.

It should be acknowledged that to some degree the focus and funding of air quality improvement measures have understandably largely targeted urban areas and cities, the bi-product of improving air quality being to reduce GHG emissions, particularly in the area of transport. The response to poor air quality has had a positive effect - what is required now is an equal and proportional focus on the pressing issues facing CCN member authorities in their attempts to reduce carbon emissions.

Our research can find very little evidence to suggest that any differences in the nature of CCN member areas relative to largely urban/city areas have been considered in climate change initiatives to date. There are few case studies that address the varied challenges faced in CCN member authorities.

The focus on cities leads to solutions that may be relevant to and implementable in urban areas. But in England the complexity and diversity of CCN member authorities, with the combination of towns and remote rural and coastal communities, poor connectivity, lower average wages, smaller businesses, and higher elderly population, means that the current solutions identified need to be re-imagined with new incentives, if we are to accelerate climate change at the pace needed.

CCN areas also hold many opportunities such as the ability to support sustainable communities with employment, education, leisure and housing all being able to served in local settings without the need to travel in to city areas, the ability to work with significant land owners to influence the future of development and to create strategic approaches to land management.

Given that CCN areas by far account for the largest proportion of GHGs and have the slowest rate of reduction, it seems logical that future policy and funding should recognise the challenges presented in county areas and that, without being specifically targeted in government policy, this could undermine the Government's ability to hit its targets.

Key Messages

01

CCN member authorities account for more than half (53%) of the territorial CO2 emissions in England.

02

The rate of emissions reductions in CCN member authorities (-30%) is slower than in urban/city areas (London and Core Cities -39%) despite a strong response from CCN members in their place.

03

The economic and social factors that are present in CCN member authorities require special, tailored responses – lower average wages, greater distance to access key services, poorer accessibility to public transport and technological infrastructure, smaller businesses with lower growth and lower economies of scale.

04

Opportunities do exist to galvanise the power of the CCN member authorities in tacking more than half of the CO2 emissions challenge in England – attitudinally people are more receptive to climate change initiatives in rural areas.

05

CCN member authorities are well positioned to integrate action and deliver the co-benefits of carbon reduction activities.

06

Government should engage with CCN member authorities, at an early stage in order to maximise opportunities to deliver change across county areas

5. Examining the Themes: Transport

The Climate Change Commission identified a number of key changes that would need to be made to enable the UK to meet its net zero ambition in respect of surface transportation, these targets largely being embraced within Government policy.

This report focuses on those areas where local authorities have a greater ability to influence emissions, predominately the areas of cars, vans and HGVs. Transportation emissions are where slowest progress has been made to date. This report confirms that CCN member authorities face different challenges to urban centres and cities. People travel further to work, school, shop and for leisure, access to public transport is more limited, and the geographical landscape more challenging.

Our analysis of data from BEIS shows that local authority influenceable emission (CO2 emissions excluding motorways, trains and air travel) have on average reduced at a slower rate in CCN areas relative to cities, whether that be in absolute terms or per capita.

What is noteworthy is the level of variation in emissions reduction between CCN member authorities between 2005 and 2018. It therefore begs the question why there are such levels of variation? Further work needs to be undertaken to explore why emissions vary so much between authorities, but equally we must consider why, in general, emissions in CCN areas are reducing at a slower rate that other types of areas across England. To answer this question, we must consider the factors that influence why people need to travel to conduct their daily lives, whether that be travelling to work, school, shop or leisure. We will therefore explore:

· How long it takes to travel to key locations;
· How accessible alternative forms of transport are;
· The switch to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs).

Table 2 - Transport emissions 2005 - 2018

Council type	Transport emissions in 2005	Transport emissions in 2018	Change
Core Cities	5711	4784	-16.2%
London Councils	9082	6999	-22.9%
Metropolitan boroughs and non-CCN unitaries	17823	15997	-10.2%
CCN councils	47682	45425	-4.7%

Graph 5 - Reduction in Influenceable Transport Emissions

Average wages are lower than cities, and the industries that exist are different. Digital connectivity is often poorer, with less connectivity and slower broadband. For example, in total, there are around 211,000 premises in CCN areas that have access to speeds of less than 10 mbit/s. This is three times more than the rest of the country combined (71,000 in London, metropolitan boroughs, and non-county unitaries). This shows that for many of these households, working at home would be difficult - and therefore they are more likely to drive to work or use public transport. This creates further challenges county areas have in reducing transport emissions.

Travel to key locations

In December 2020, the Department for Transport [8] launched a call for evidence in the future of rural transport, highlighting that rural areas face a range of mobility concerns which can lead to social and economic issues.

"Residents in rural areas continue to be dependent on private cars for mobility. Private car use remains higher in more rural areas. This is partly associated with older residents and partly due to the reduced availability of alternatives."

This dependency impacts the average median time taken to get to work or a town centre using transport other than a car or van. In all circumstances the travel time is significantly longer for individuals living in CCN member authorities. This becomes a significant issue when we consider how people live their lives in a modern society, for example longer working hours or greater number of families where both parents work.

Accessibility of alternative forms of transport

We have explored the primary alternative forms of transport which are public transport, cycling and walking. The table below shows the average proportion of people that travel to work using the various forms of transport available.

The data clearly shows that as areas become more rural, more people tend to travel to work by car (65%) whereas in cities where public transport is more accessible nearly half of people use public transport.

BOX 2 - *National Audit Office – Achieving Net Zero, December 2020*

All cars and vans to be electric by 2050, enabled by the installation of over 200,000 chargers, plus a 10% reduction in car travel through increased walking and the use of public transport.

Reduced emissions from heavy-goods vehicles (HGV's) through electrification and switch to hydrogen fuelling requiring nearly 1,000 hydrogen fuelling stations and around 100,000 depot based chargers.

More than 50% of rail track electrified by 2040, with hydrogen powered trains deployed where electrification is not possible.

[8] DfT Future of Rural Transport Call for Evidence – December 2020 - https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-transport-rural-strategy-call-for-evidence/future-of-transport-rural-strategy-call-for-evidence

Table 3 - Time taken to travel to key locations

Area	Average times to key locations				
	Average time to employment centre with at least 5000 jobs by PT/walk	Average time to employment centre with 500 to 4999 jobs by PT/walk	Average time to employment centre with 100 to 499 jobs by PT/walk	Average time to town centre by cycle	Average time to town centre by PT/walk
	2017				
	Minutes				
Median for all local authorities in London	22	8	6	10	14
Median for Core English Cities	22	10	7	11	17
Median for Key Cities	21	11	8	12	20
Median for CCN members	39	14	13	13	25
Median for all English authorities	30	12	9	12	21

Table 4 - Travel to work patterns

Area	Method of travel to work by method of travel to work (% of pop aged 16-74)									
	Work mainly at or from home	Underground, metro, light rail tram	Train	Bus, minibus, or coach	Taxi	Motorcycle, scooter or moped	Driving a car or van	Bicycle	On foot	Other methods
	2011									
	Percentage									
Median for all local authorities in London	4.5	24.2	10.3	13.2	0.5	1.1	27.7	3.3	7.3	0.7
Median for Core English Cities	3.4	1	2.4	18	0.9	0.5	49.3	2.5	13.1	0.6
Median for Key Cities	3.6	0.1	2.1	8	0.7	0.7	59.6	2.6	12.8	0.7
Median for CCN members	6.4	0.1	1.8	3.2	0.3	0.7	65.3	2.6	11	0.6
Median for all English authorities	5.4	0.2	2.5	4.7	0.4	0.8	63.5	2.3	10	0.6

In many smaller towns, residents have few options for convenient and affordable public transport and risk being cut off from basic services if they don't have access to a car. Due to the physical size of CCN member authorities it is difficult to provide a sufficient, universal, and safe alternative of active travel infrastructure, including safe walking and cycling routes between towns and villages, increasing the reliance on the private car. There are few examples of effective transport hubs and car sharing schemes in CCN areas, although a model that could be considered for wider adoption has been developed by Cheshire East Council and North Yorkshire, where they have each introduced a car club in the rural areas of the council.

This, in turn, creates an assumption that rural communities need to be designed with the private car in mind, and has created an unmet demand due to the lack of services, causing a fundamental impact on rural and CCN areas ability to meet their carbon reduction objectives.

The demise and accessibility of public transport, and particularly buses have been well documented by CCN. There were 97 million fewer bus journeys in 2019 across 36 counties compared to a decade ago, due to a £348m funding gap. [9]

The report by CCN also identified that the funding for buses in CCN member authority areas has reduced at a faster pace (30.1%) relative to metropolitan boroughs and other unitary authorities (23.5%) which is all likelihood is resulting in reduced/less frequent bus services.

It is likely that this trend will continue unless there is a significant reversal in the availability of public transport in CCN areas and this will mean a potential increase in car use rather than the reduction the Government needs to meet its climate change targets.

Active Travel

A further way to meet climate change targets is through active travel. Encouraging active travel is a key Government objective in the delivery of the accelerated climate change targets. British Cycling Statistics show that 1% all journeys in the UK are now by bicycle, but of these, only 27% of journeys are in CCN areas relative to 46% of the population. This is likely linked to the geography in CCN areas and the long distances involved in making journeys. However, further work needs to be undertaken to understand why proportionally fewer people in CCN areas cycle to complete their journeys, as an alternative to public transport or a private car.

Active travel and cycling specifically has come into the spotlight recently. In the last 12 months, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on cycling habits. According to GoCompare, September 2020 [10], only 22% of people used their cars during the first COVID-19 lockdown. Research indicated that the number of cars on the road decreased from then on with up to 78% of the driving population leaving their vehicles parked up and out of action. The only method of travelling to see an increase during the pandemic has been cycling. It is not clear whether the impact on increased cycling has been equally split across all local authority areas.

[9] CCN – Reversing the decline of County Buses - https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/advocacy/publications-and-research/
[10] GoCompare Coronavirus travel report – September 2020 -https://www.gocompare.com/motoring/reports-statistics/coronavirus-travel-report/

The changing behaviours as a result of the pandemic indicate how systemic change in commuting habits could be influenced in the longer term, but we will need to see the extent to which travel habits return to normal and whether the impact on CCN areas is significant, as we emerge from the severe effects of the pandemic.

Regardless, there are severe and additional challenges faced by CCN areas that have yet to be recognised in the Government's policy direction to reduce climate change. Initiatives and financial support, therefore, need to be targeted at CCN areas where car and van use is highest, if the UK is to achieve its target of replacing car journeys by 10% by 2050.

The scale of geography used should therefore be large enough to implement national priorities and offer genuine choices in spatial distributions to support sustainable growth, but small enough to reflect local circumstances and relationships.

In most two-tier areas, this is likely to be county geography but it could also be managed on functional geography (provided this is coterminous with local authority boundaries) or on the geography of a single unitary authority that covers a large geographical area (e.g. Cornwall, Wiltshire, Buckinghamshire). MCA areas may serve this purpose, especially where a Spatial Development Strategy is being prepared, but some are likely to cover an area that is considered too large to capture local context and therefore to plan effectively.

The Switch to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs)

The switch to ULEVs is the predominant aspect of the Government's plans to reduce transport emissions. The current landscape paints an interesting picture in respect of CCN authorities.

Our consultation with CCN member authorities highlighted that in considering carbon reduction in transport, it is also important to note that construction of the network is also detrimental to carbon reduction targets, in terms of measuring scope 1 and 2 emissions. Baseline measurements will be required to enable councils to set targets to get to net zero construction as the necessary data is not currently collated across all categories of the road network.

Our analysis shows that between 2009 and 2019 the number of vehicles registered in England has grown by 14% to around 33 million vehicles. Over that period 53% of vehicles registered were in CCN authority areas, relative to only 47% of the households in England.

Graph 6 - DoT Vehicles Registered

If we explore the trends relating to ULEVs which include electric only powered vehicles we see that the proportion of ULEVs licenced by individuals and companies in CCN authorities is only 38% relative to the all vehicle registrations at 53% - there is therefore a slower uptake of ULEVs in CCN member authorities.

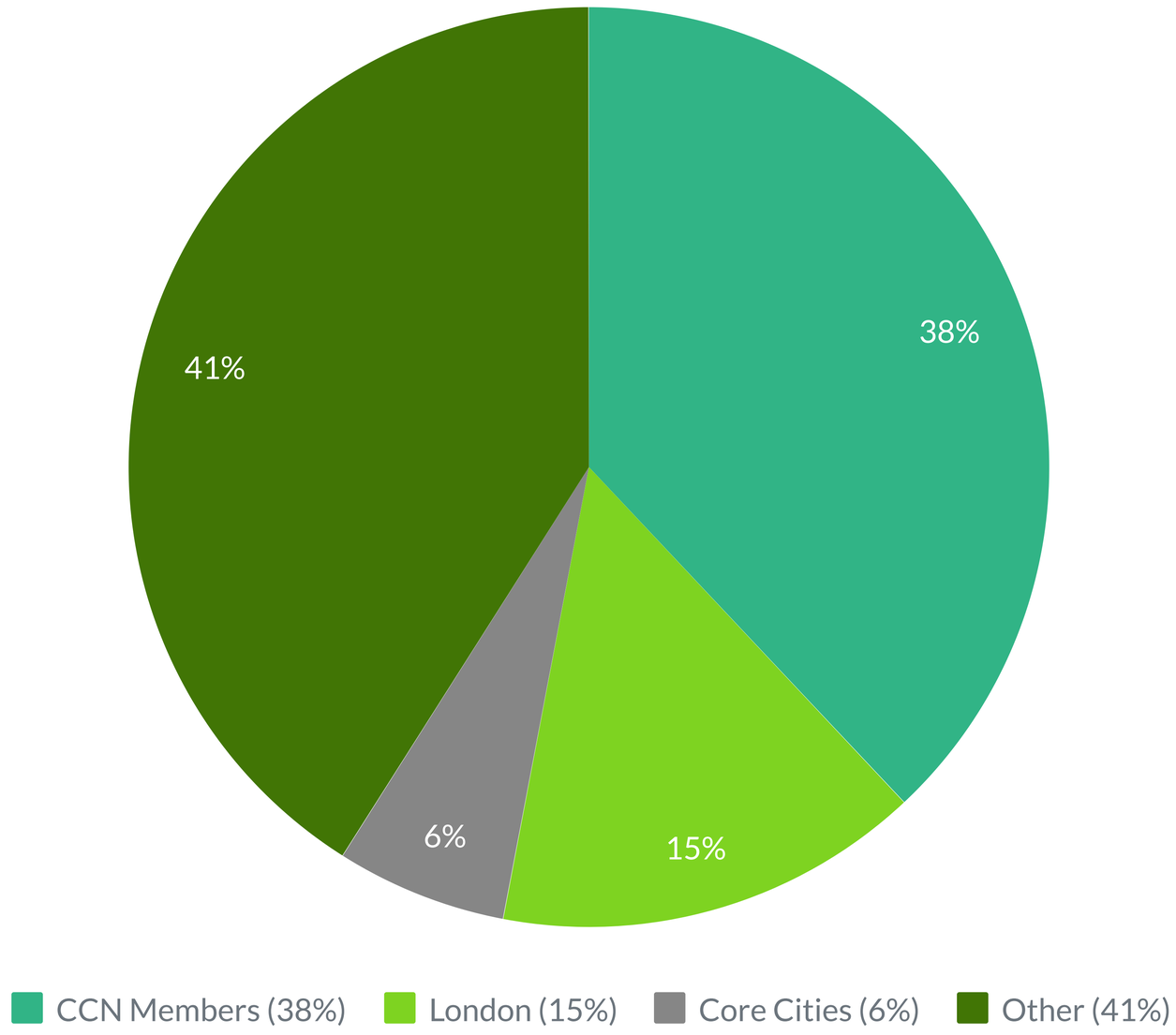
Furthermore, of the ULEVs registered, there appears to be an interesting dynamic regarding the driver of the ULEV market. 53% of the ULEVs in England are currently registered to companies. However, in CCN authority areas the number of private ULEVs licenced is nearly double company registrations.

Without further analysis of the car market, it is difficult to be certain what is driving these market dynamics, but there appears to be clear differences in buying behaviour in CCN member areas relative to other areas in England that may require different approaches and incentives to accelerate the swap to ULEV and pure electric vehicles.

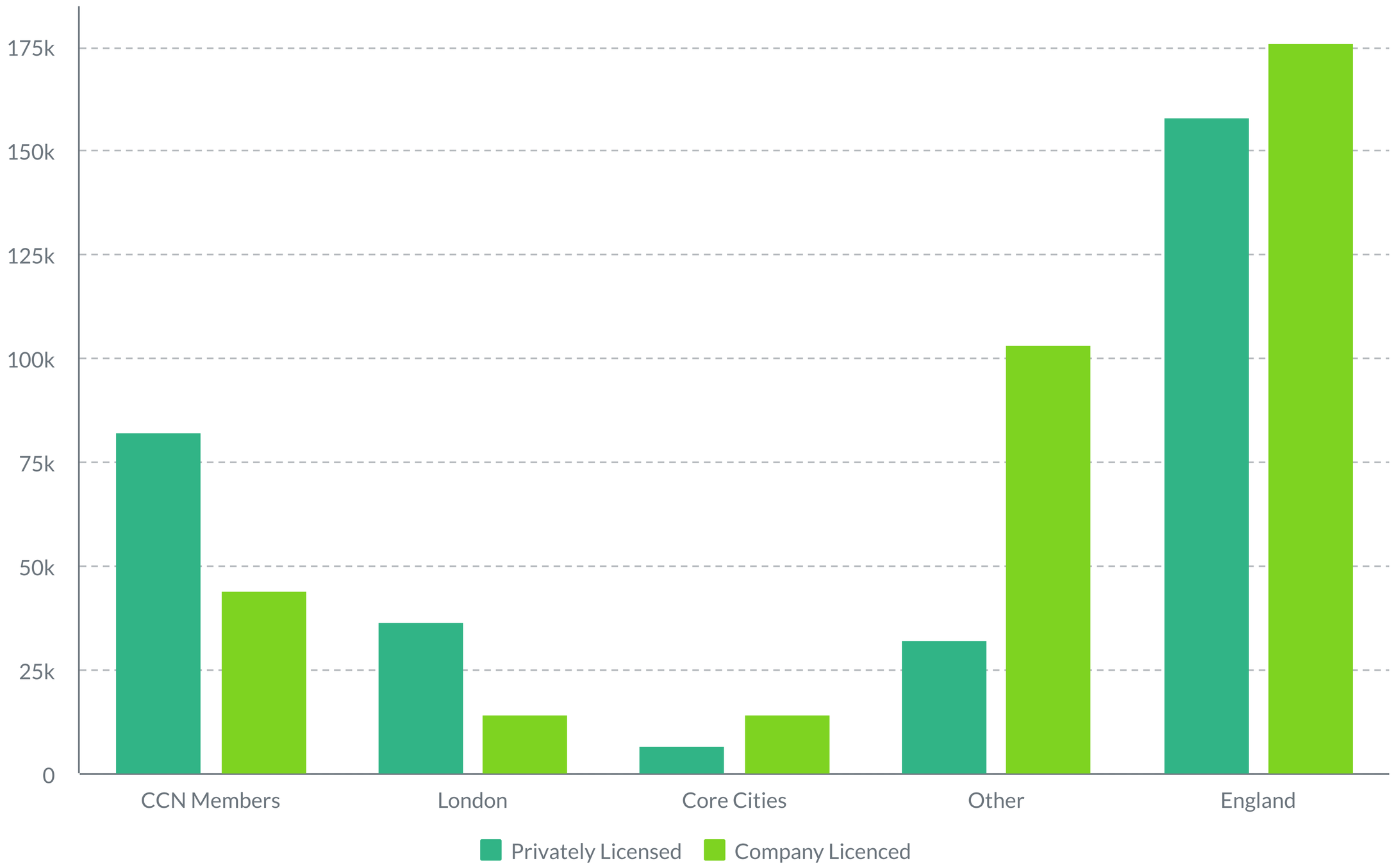
BOX 3 - RAC – Telegraph 5Th March 2021

- Many drivers are still put off switching to an electric car as they are considered more expensive and more difficult to fuel in public, as charging points are far less prevalent than petrol stations;
- RAC analysis of Department for Transport figures showed the number of privately owned electric vehicles jumped from 56,000 in 2019 to 86,000 in 2020;
- When company and commercial cars are added in, there are now a total of 213,000 electric vehicles on the UK's roads. This, however, is a tiny proportion of the 32.5m cars on the road across the UK.

Graph 7 - ULEV Registered Vehicles Q3 2020 - DFT Statistics



Graph 8 - ULEVs Licenced Arrangement Q3 2020



The Britain Talks Climate survey, 2020 [11] highlights that attitudes in rural areas towards the transition to EV's are less positive than in urban areas. Some of the key responses show the significance of the attitudinal barrier that needs to be overcome in CCN member authority areas relative to urban/city areas.

The survey by Britain Talks Climate, 2020 identified that;

- 45% of rural citizens are very or somewhat worried that tackling climate change means they won't be able to drive their petrol or diesel car (29% urban);
- 61% see bans as unfair because the Government previously encouraged people to buy diesel;
- 55% are concerned about extra costs to daily life.

Some of this can be linked to the behavioural aspects covered in section 9 of this report.

These attitudes are driven by the need for cars as a more viable and reliable mode of transport in rural areas and charging anxiety, and will have existing fears about EV transition being reinforced by the current deployment of EV charging stations, where there is a concentration of charging facilities in London despite the limited ownership of ULEV's.

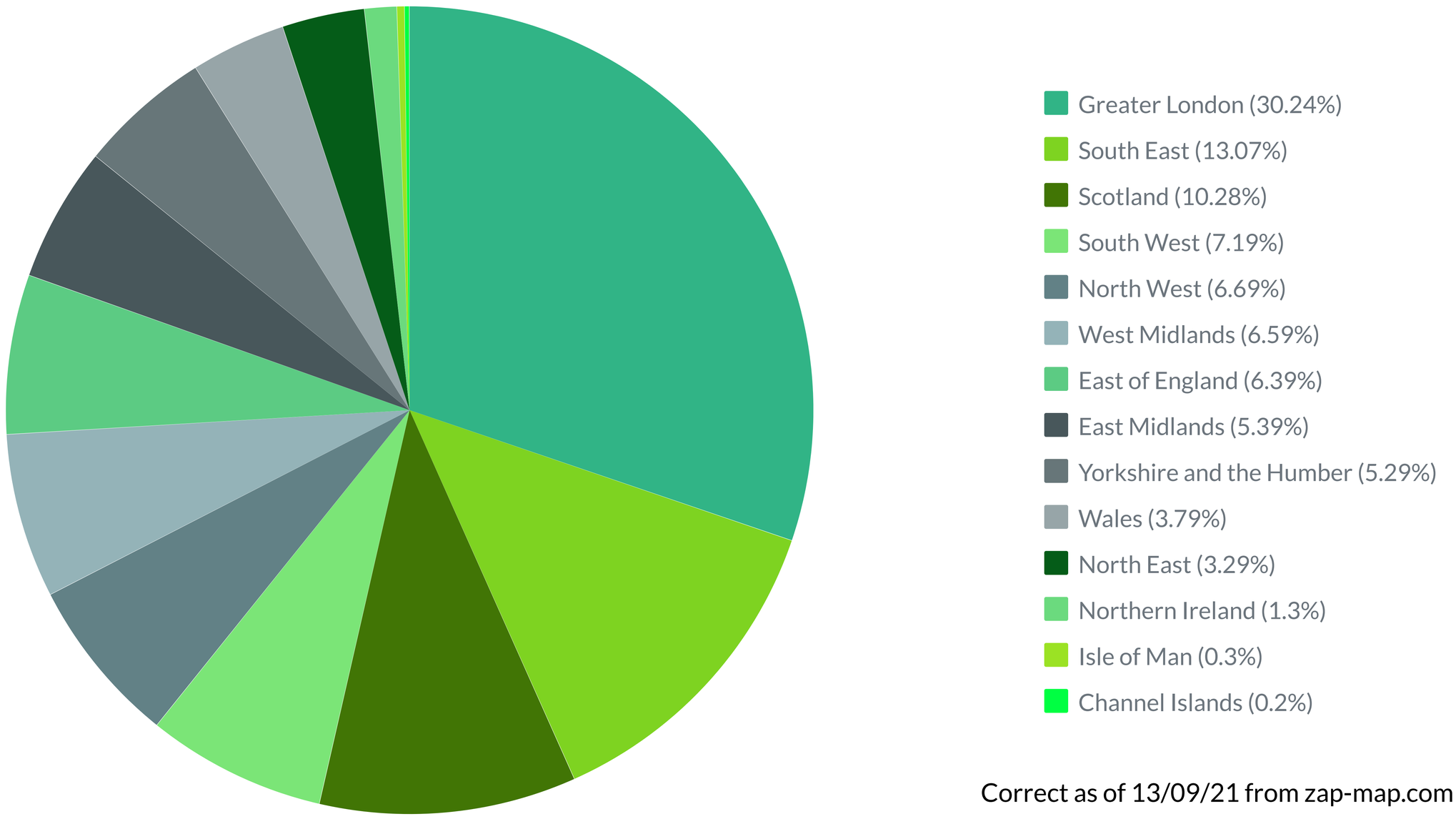
In the UK, the Government, local authorities, and energy companies are trying to provoke change through the installation of electric vehicle infrastructure, but on the face of it the deployment strategy only seems to increase the difficulties in CCN member authorities.

Firstly, installations and usage are still very patchy across the UK and lag behind the rest of the World and there is a high degree of charging anxiety in the wider UK population. Secondly, the data shows that Greater London has by far the lion share of EV charging points relative to the rest of the country.

We have the situation where London has 15% of registered ULEVs but 31% of the charging points in the UK. This preliminary report has not sought to determine why this disparity has occurred, but it does raise major concerns that if the roll out of EV infrastructure is left in the hand of private companies/private finance we could see a delay in the roll out of EV infrastructure to CCN member authorities if is it is seen as uneconomic – a similar situation to Broadband that has existed for far too long and that is still unresolved.

[11] Britain Talks Climate Survey – February 2021 - https://climateoutreach.org/reports/rural-attitudes-climate-uk/

Graph 9 - Distribution of UK charging points by geographical area



Correct as of 13/09/21 from zap-map.com

It is worth noting that incentives created to change behaviours and the ways that people live have been shown to be particularly effective in increasing the take up of ULEVs. The Netherlands has one of the fastest growing electric charging networks in the World. Amsterdam, for example, is one of the world's leading cities in electric transportation, home to almost 19,000 electric car drivers and 300 fully electric Car2Go-cars to help locals and tourists to get around town. The city invests in incentives, support and regulations for everyone to adopt electric vehicles and has used effective consultation techniques to understand and change the behaviours of its citizens.

If it continues to prove difficult to persuade citizens and businesses in CCN areas to switch to ULEV vehicles at sufficient pace Government should consider reversing its decision to cut the incentives for ULEV purchase, and may in fact include a rural inflator to encourage take up.

Despite the challenges faced by CCN member authorities' constructive action is being taken which, with the appropriate level of flexibility and funding, could be successfully accelerated and scaled. For example, the Car Club scheme introduced in Cheshire East and North Yorkshire Councils. Another example in Essex County Council is the development of their Stop, Swap Go programme to deliver sustainable behaviour change in transport choices for citizens.

Case Studies

Hertfordshire County Council

The Hertfordshire Leaders Group, attended by all council leaders, agreed to establish the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) in January 2020. HCCSP's aim is to share information, coordinate and influence solutions, and bring forward proposals for key interventions around climate change and sustainability across Hertfordshire.

The transport plan is in the development stages and will align with the delivery of current policies and policy change options in areas including electric vehicles, taxi licensing and co-ordinated long-term behaviour change campaigns.

Suffolk County Council

Plug in Suffolk is the UK's first fully open fast charging network. The pioneering contactless payment system makes visitor charging easy and accessible. Unlike other visitor charging systems, there is no need to register to a network, and no need for apps, specific access cards or key fobs. Drivers simply tap their contactless credit card and begin charging.

Plug in Suffolk is a pilot project developed by Suffolk County Council in partnership with EO Charging and Bulb, the green energy supplier.

The project has been boosted by support from the Council's 2020 Fund that is supporting 100 new charging points in 50 locations across the county. These points will be hosted by community organisations and will target rural locations with no current access to public charging. This new infrastructure will be rolled out in early 2021 and will give residents and visitors much greater confidence that they will always be able to find a charging station close by.

Cheshire East Council

Cheshire East Council and Storengy have joined forces and secured funding towards a £1m scheme which will see bin wagons converted to take home-produced hydrogen. The scheme comprised of both public and private sector money – with a £345,000 contribution from the local enterprise partnership's Local Growth Fund – will see the first green hydrogen fuelling facility in the North West of England, bringing carbon and air quality benefits to Cheshire East.

Installed at the Ansa environmental services depot in Middlewich, it is proposed to produce hydrogen in the greenest way possible – using an electrolyser connected to solar panels and grey-water recycling. This will provide safe, clean hydrogen fuel, which will be pumped into dual-fuel bin wagons. Initially, two bin wagons owned by the council and one vehicle owned by Storengy will be converted to use the green hydrogen.

This will reduce the council's and Storengy's diesel use by more than 10,000 litres per year. The project has been awarded a grant of £345,000 from the £4.1m energy fund, run by Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as part of the Local Growth Fund.

Key Messages - Transport

01

The UK Government's strategy is to move to Electric Vehicles as quickly as possible with no new combustion engine vehicles bought after 2030, and a 10% shift from car use to alternative forms of transport

02

Transport emissions nationally are the most challenging to address, but the unique environment that exists within CCN member authorities make tackling transport emissions much more difficult and emissions have reduced by only 5% between 2005 and 2018 relative to the England average of nearly 10%

03

Citizens in CCN areas are worried about the transition to ULEVs and reluctant to move from their polluting diesel/petrol vehicles

04

Consideration of incentives and tax efficient schemes is required to drive the take up of low carbon solutions

05

A specific and differentiated solution needs to be designed and delivered in CCN member authority areas if a meaningful contribution to the Government's strategy is to be made

Key Messages - Transport

06

The additional transportation challenges that exist in CCN member authorities make using the car a far more viable transport option:

- Average time taken to travel to work using alternative transport to the car is up to 77% higher in CCN member authority areas;

- 65% of people in CCN member authorities travel to work by car relative to 28% in London and 49% in the Core Cities;

- Public transport is a less viable option in rural areas, where funding support for busses has reduced by 30% in ten years relative to 23% in urban areas;

- 53% of cars in England are registered in CCN member authority's relative to the number of households at 47%;

- Only 38% of ULEV's are registered in CCN member authorities – people in CCN member authorities are unwilling or unable to invest in ULEV's at the same rate as people in urban areas;

- The ULEV "boom" is being generated by company car purchases which are predominately registered in urban areas;

- The UK charging infrastructure currently favours urban areas (31% of charging points are in Greater London) disincentivising rural take up and running the risk of a deployment challenge similar to Broadband where rural communities have been left behind.

- There is insufficient walking and cycling infrastructure in these areas

6. Examining the Key Themes: Housing

Domestic buildings are the 3rd largest emitter of carbon dioxide in the UK. More than two thirds of domestic emissions come from the burning of fossil fuels in the form of gas, heating oil and other fuels. This will need to be challenged in order to deliver a net zero carbon future.

The scale of the housing challenge

According to the Environmental Audit Committee the scale of the challenge to retrofit existing homes to tackle the climate crisis is 'enormous' [12]. Energy efficiency is a precursor to the transition to low carbon heat, so action must be taken in the 2020s to set homes on a decarbonisation trajectory to meet our net zero targets. The Government's current targets for domestic energy efficiency are set for an 80 percent reduction in emissions by 2050 and not the net zero target established in law. Yet the Government is not on track to meet this.

The Committee said:

"in 2018, 85% of homes in England had full double glazing, up from 71% of homes in 2008. Almost half (49%) had cavity or solid wall insulation and 38% had 200mm or more of loft insulation. Thus, many of the energy improvement measures that are easier to install with lower levels of disruption (e.g. loft insulation, condensing boilers) have already been achieved. To make the necessary significant impact, much deeper retrofits will be required, and the scale, cost and challenge of deployment should not be underestimated."

Additionally, BEIS have also acknowledged the scale of change that is required: "the built environment will need to be almost completely decarbonised by 2050, and achieving this must be through a mix of energy efficiency and a transition to low carbon heat".

[12] Environmental Audit Committee – Energy Efficiency of Existing Homes – March 2021 - https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/5171/documents/52521/default/

Estimates of the investment needed to bring all homes up to EPC C vary. BEIS's preliminary estimate is that it will require mobilising between £35 and £65 billion across the UK to 2035. However, there is a wide variation in the costs for bringing all homes in the UK up to this standard. Retrofit costs average £18,000 per property, before the addition of a heat pump.

Given that there are around 19 million properties in the UK in need of some energy efficiency upgrade, the overall cost to meet net zero from domestic buildings could be far more costly than the Government's estimate of between £35-£65 billion. The requirement for upgrading heating systems is more difficult (and costly) to achieve in areas that have no access to the gas grid (i.e. rural CCN areas) and this will need to be considered in the allocation of Government funding.

To meet its climate targets, the UK has an ambition to retrofit all homes to EPC band C standard by 2035. But only 29% of homes today meet this standard, and the UK's current policy approach is nowhere near ambitious enough to tackle the remaining 71%. The Green Alliance in 2019 [13] stated that the UK had the least energy-efficient housing stock in Europe.

The report stated that if every UK home had cost effective, conventional energy saving measures installed, energy use would fall by 25%. Current UK ambitions are about half this, so would reduce energy use by about 12%. If the full technical potential of conventional measures was realised, regardless of cost, energy use could be reduced by about 53% by 2035. But, to achieve the 80-100% cut in carbon emissions that the UK has committed to by 2050, much more ambitious energy savings will be needed.

BOX 4 - *National Audit Office – Achieving Net Zero, December 2020*

By 2050, the expectation is that almost all the 29 million homes in the UK will have been decarbonised, with only approximately 10% of the most difficult-to-decarbonise homes still using fossil fuels in 2050.

A big part of the challenge is how to decarbonise heating. Decarbonisation may be achieved by connecting around 5 million homes to low-carbon heat networks (where a central low-carbon heat source provides heat to a number of homes) and installing heat pumps in nearly 20 million more homes (heat pumps are powered by electricity and draw heat from an external source, such as the ground or air).

Extensive energy efficiency improvements, including around 12 million cavity and solid walls insulated plus continued improvements in lighting and appliance efficiency are expected with no new gas cooking appliances installed from 2030.

(Source: National Audit Office – Achieving Net Zero, December 2020)

[13] The Green Alliance – Reinventing Retrofit - https://green-alliance.org.uk/reinventing_retrofit.php

The Challenges for CCN member authorities

Life in rural CCN communities is clearly different than in cities: culture, demographics, access to the gas grid, deprivation and household income. With their relatively low population densities, distinctive geographical identities and typically strong sense of community, CCN areas can be attractive places to live.

The graph below highlights the reduction in domestic emissions between 2005 and 2018 in each of the CCN member councils, relative to the UK average and shows a relative consistency in reduction in CO2 domestic emissions. At 35% to 40%, this would support the assertion that much of the easy to achieve reductions (e.g. double glazing, insulation) have already been made.

The governance arrangements in some counties where two-tier arrangements exist limit the influence of county councils in housing services, and effective interaction with private or public sector housing. This is worthy of consideration if the standards of new dwellings are to be brought into line with zero carbon ambitions. As the responsibility for both planning and housing is held by the district and unitary councils, this makes it difficult to deliver common strategic planning objectives at scale. County councils therefore need to rely on their ability to influence policy and decision making indirectly.

Building on positive attitudes

There are opportunities to seize the momentum in CCN member areas as highlighted in the survey results from Britain Talks Climate which identified that compared to urban areas rural communities are more likely to engage in a range of personal actions to reduce their climate impact, including:

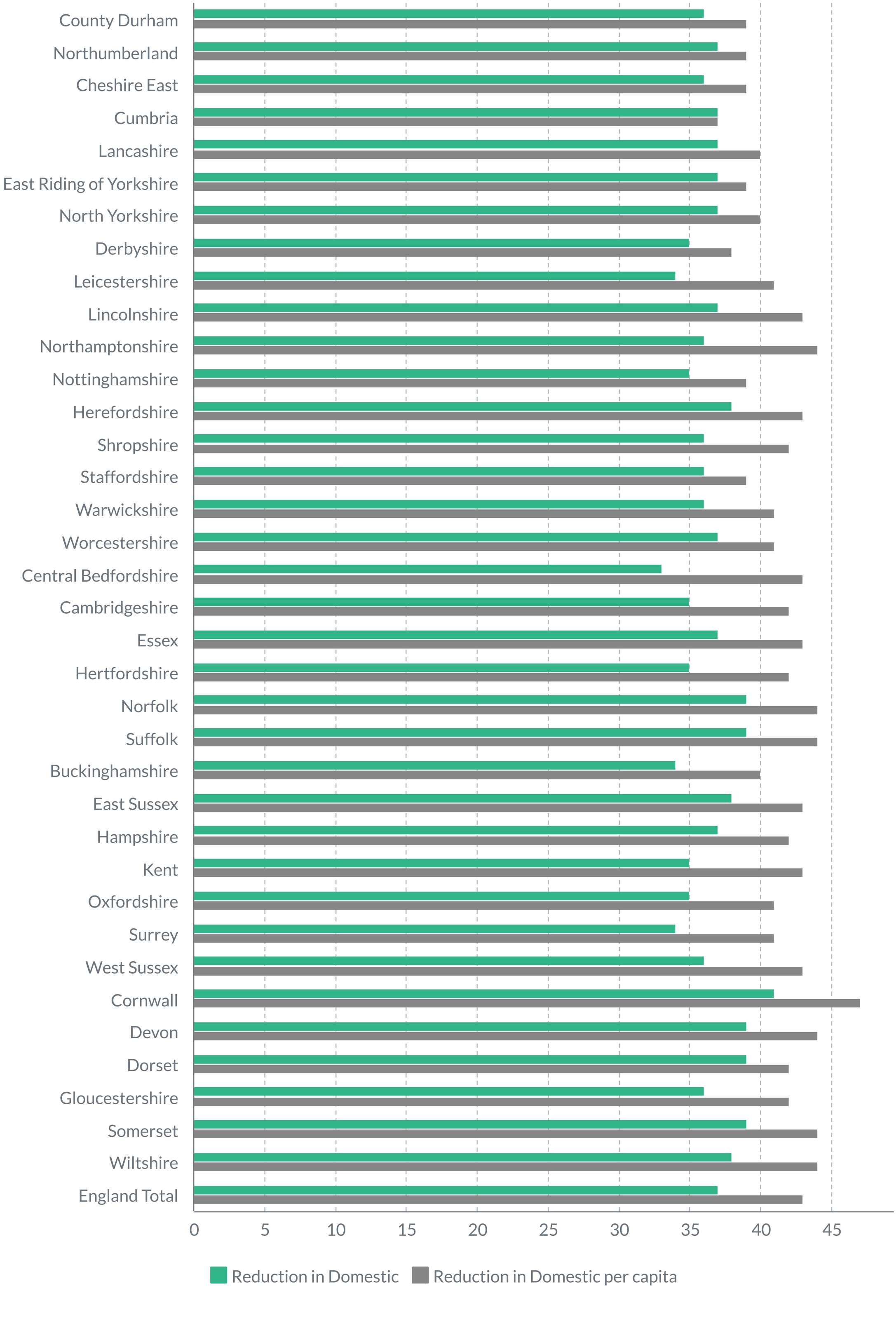
· Reduce, Re-use, Recycle – the Circular Economy;
· Stay local:Buy local;
· Improve home insulation;
· Switch to renewable energy.

To take advantage of this opportunity it is important that solutions can be designed at a local level. 94% of respondents in the Climate Assembly report [14] ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that “people in different parts of the country should be offered different solutions to zero carbon heating”. They argued that areas should be able to choose the technologies best suited to their needs.

The best technology to use for zero carbon heating is a matter of significant policy debate. However at least 80% of assembly members ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that each of hydrogen (83%), heat pumps (80%), and heat networks (80%) should be part of how the UK gets to net zero.

[14] Climate assembly, Path to Net Zero – September 2020 - https://www.climateassembly.uk/report/

Graph 10 - % Reduction in Influenceable Domestic Emissions 2005 - 2008



The transition from fossil fuels

The Government's Energy White Paper [15] aims to ban gas boilers in new build homes by 2030. However, in many CCN communities, access to gas grids is the exception. The capacity of electricity grids is unreliable in outlying rural and coastal areas of the UK. Many citizens are living with out-dated, oil powered boilers with no affordable alternative. Many homes are poorly insulated.

The costs of replacing these oil boilers with alternative heat sources will be significant. Insulation costs are also high. District Heating schemes may not appropriate in these large CCN communities. The mixed economy and population means that the variety of challenges must be recognised in diversifying the solutions required.

Approximately 1.5 million homes in the UK are not connected to the gas grid and depend on oil for heating, and a further 200,000 use liquified petroleum gas (LPG). The Energy Efficiency in Existing Homes report makes the case for special arrangements for the transformation of off- gas grid homes, particularly in rural communities.

The report says that:

"although the costs of heat pumps are due to fall in the future, a report for BEIS found the costs of the work involved to prepare and fully install an air source heat pump to be between £14,750 and £21,550 depending on the size of the property, 10 times higher than the cost of a traditional boiler. This cost far exceeds the maximum £5,000 grants available. All in all, the up-front cost of replacement is prohibitive and remains well beyond the reach of many in rural communities where wages are on average lower and will take many years to recoup."

The Committee on Climate Change projects that to meet the sixth carbon budget, around 13MtCO2e of carbon savings will be needed from residential buildings by 2030. Using the conventional approach to achieve these savings would mean installing 90,000 solid wall and 200,000 cavity wall insulation measures every year. At least 15 million homes would need to be retrofitted by 2030 and, to meet 2050 carbon targets, the same homes would need to have further measures installed again after 2030. Doing this would more than triple the UK's current rate of energy efficiency installations.

There are around eight million solid wall properties in the UK. Solid walls are less energy efficient than cavity walls and are more expensive to insulate. They are more likely to be located in rural areas, and if so, they are less likely to be connected to the gas grid and may be more difficult to access and more reliant on heating oil or LPG fuel systems.

[15] Energy White Paper – Powering our Net Zero Future – December 2020 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-white-paper-powering-our-net-zero-future

Planning for new homes

New dwellings and buildings are being built to higher standards due to more stringent requirements within building regulations, but as indicated in the ADEPT report, local authorities need to be given the powers they need via planning and building regulations to require all new homes to be zero carbon by 2025. This will be critical if local authorities are to grasp control of zero carbon developments in their localities.

The Green Deal energy efficiency scheme, which ran from 2013 to 2015, assumed there would be high consumer interest in low cost insulation measures. But just 14,000 households (0.05% of target properties) took advantage of Green Deal loans during the scheme's existence, even though they were well publicised. By contrast, people buy double glazing regularly: it is estimated that 20 per cent of homeowners are considering it for the future. This is despite the fact that, at £250-390 per tCO2 saved, it can cost up to four times more than Green Deal measures to achieve the same level of warmth.

But cost is not the sole, or even most important factor for people. Hassle and aesthetics are at least as important. The current policy approach does not take this into account. For large scale retrofits to be a desirable choice, they have to be seen as simple to do and enhance a home's appearance, as well as being affordable (see section 9 on attitudes and behaviours).

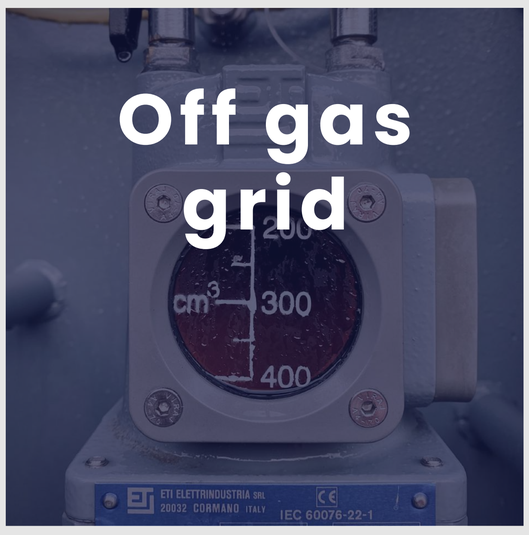
The Government announced its Green Homes Grant Scheme in 2020 (GHG). This scheme provides vouchers to cover two-thirds of the cost of eligible improvements, (including insulation and low-carbon heating) up to a maximum Government contribution of £5,000 (100% up to £10,000 for those on benefits). The £2bn grant scheme is split into two parts: a £1.5 billion voucher scheme and a £500 million Local Authority Delivery scheme.

However, the scheme has been underutilised and homeowners have reported problems with the application process, identification of Trust Mark registered installers, administrators being slow to issue vouchers, and tradespeople reportedly left out of pocket. As at 28 February 2021, only £125m had been granted, with 42% of the vouchers issued going to CCN member authority areas relative to 47% of households. It is worth exploring this issue from a demand perspective - why were fewer grants were received in CCN member authorities if the appetite for engaging in climate change action is higher in rural areas – perhaps schemes need greater local design and management?

Under the scheme, £500 million funding has also been allocated to local authorities through the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme, to improve the energy efficiency of homes of low-income households, helping reduce fuel poverty, phasing out high carbon fossil fuel heating, and delivering progress towards the UK's commitment to net zero by 2050. This scheme is to be targeted at low income households likely to be in fuel poverty. Again, as at 28 February 2021, only £95m had been allocated.

The Environmental Audit Committee welcomed the Government's introduction of a scheme for owner occupiers to fund energy efficiency improvements. "Such a scheme is essential in order to achieve the ambition to reach energy efficient homes by 2030, given this is by far the largest pool of housing stock across the UK."

CCN Survey Results

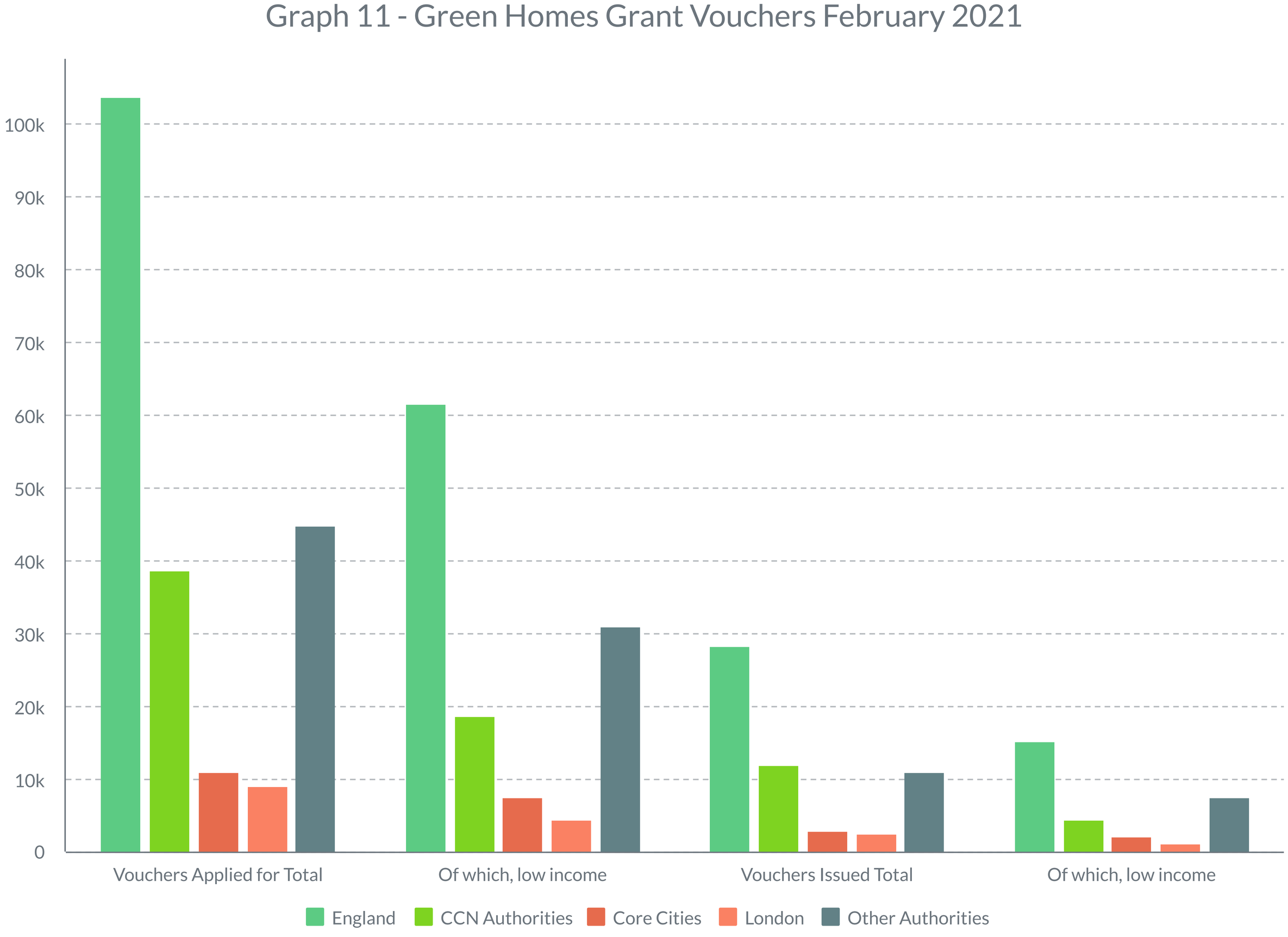


The recent survey of CCN members identified “off gas grid” homes as a significant challenge in the move to net zero. A key theme that arose was the cost, complexity and lack of confidence in new heating technologies.

An example was given for heat pumps replacing oil boilers and wood burners where homes are off the gas grid.

Further challenges highlighted were the distance from possible heat/energy sources, levels of fuel poverty, and the cost of getting electricity grid connections for renewable energy projects and electric vehicle charging in rural areas.

Graph 11 - Green Homes Grant Vouchers February 2021



However, the Environmental Audit Committee argue that the Green Homes Grant has been rushed and poorly implemented. They say that “due to the failure to properly consult, the scheme is overly optimistic, short-term, with complex administration. Many builders and installers have been left in uncertainty due to cancellations and application approvals.”

CCN members have criticised the scheme for having a short-term focus. Future schemes of this kind should take a longer-term view in order to encourage higher take up and to enable the supply chain to develop. The Government should consider why take up of Green Homes Grants have been so low in order to develop sustainable schemes in the future.

Despite the challenges faced CCN member authorities have acted to resolve these challenges as the examples below show.

Case Studies

Hampshire County Council

Nearly 24% of Hampshire’s total carbon emissions come from domestic energy, and energy bills are a significant outgoing for most households. As part of the wider climate change programme, the County Council has launched four residential projects that will address this and support efforts in reducing Hampshire-wide carbon emissions, including:

Solar Together Hampshire - a new scheme with iChoosr offering high-quality solar photovoltaic panels and battery storage. The scheme brings together the Hampshire homeowner and small-to-medium sized enterprises to get solar panels at a competitive price.

Community energy - Supporting and enabling local communities to build their own capacity for renewable energy and energy efficiency by establishing a Community Energy Network across Hampshire, with Community Energy South, including bespoke guidance and online training.

Freephone advice line – a partnership with The Environment Centre who can provide free, trusted and straightforward advice about climate change and sustainability to residents over the phone and online.

The Greening Campaign - offers a blueprint for stimulating grassroots community engagement, behaviour change, sustainability, and adaptation to climate change through a model whereby we have linked communities with Town/Parish and District/Borough Councils.

Cornwall Council

In July 2020 the Government announced funding for Cornwall Council to start work on a pioneering programme to make residents' homes more energy efficient.

The £4.2m pilot scheme is also receiving funding from the Council and its energy partner SSE. This will see improvements fitted to 83 homes managed by Cornwall Housing such as;

- decommission chimney
- hot water tank
- insulation to external walls
- ground floor insulation
- loft insulation
- solar panels
- single room ventilation and heat recovery
- double glazing
- temperature controls
- ground source heating
- heat pumps

Work started on the first 16 homes in autumn 2020. The work involves using innovative solutions that aim to significantly reduce property emissions, heat loss and running costs for residents.

The Whole House Retrofit programme is a key part of the Council's response to the climate emergency. The carbon-reducing programme aims to be a cost-effective model to improve energy efficiency to Cornwall's existing homes. It will cut energy bills for residents and help to reduce fuel poverty.

This whole house retrofit programme is clearly a start towards plans to fit mass retrofit improvements across Cornwall's housing stock. The scheme will help Cornwall strive towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

However, this scheme touches a small minority of households in Cornwall and will need a significant boost to deliver sustainable change at scale.

Key Messages - Housing

CCN members need to collaborate across the tiers of Government in order to drive sustainable policy and development on planning and housing matters. But also as some CCN areas are land owners and planning authorities they can also deliver exemplar housing schemes

Clarity is required on the technologies required to be used in CCN areas in order to retrofit “off gas grid” homes

The cost of retrofitting “off grid” homes is outside the reach of many residents

The take-up of the Green Homes Grant has been low and the Government should consider why this is the case

Further consideration of incentives and tax efficient schemes is required, together with a longer-term view of their application. CCN areas are able to support investment to help decarbonisation of existing energy networks, creation of new heat networks and micro generation in rural communities.

7. Examining the Key Themes: Business & Commercial

In respect of business and commercial activity, the climate change solutions are more complex. The variety of business sectors and practices means that whilst all of the technologies do not yet exist to sufficiently reduce GHG emissions, and funding innovative projects in key areas will be critical to success, a clear direction of travel has been established. This has been encapsulated in the Committee on Climate Change recommendations to the Government:

- Extensive roll out of carbon capture & storage (CCS) to capture emissions from on-site combustion as well as non-combustion processes that release greenhouse gases, such as in the cement and ammonia sectors;
- Widespread deployment of hydrogen, electrification or bioenergy to sectors not decarbonising through CCS;
- Resource efficiency measures such as waste heat recovery and use.

Examining the local authority influenceable CO2 emissions from Industry and Commercial activity in CCN authority areas relative to other areas in England, in aggregate emissions have reduced 7% less in CCN member authorities relative to the Core Cities group, and 6% less relative to London and all other authorities.

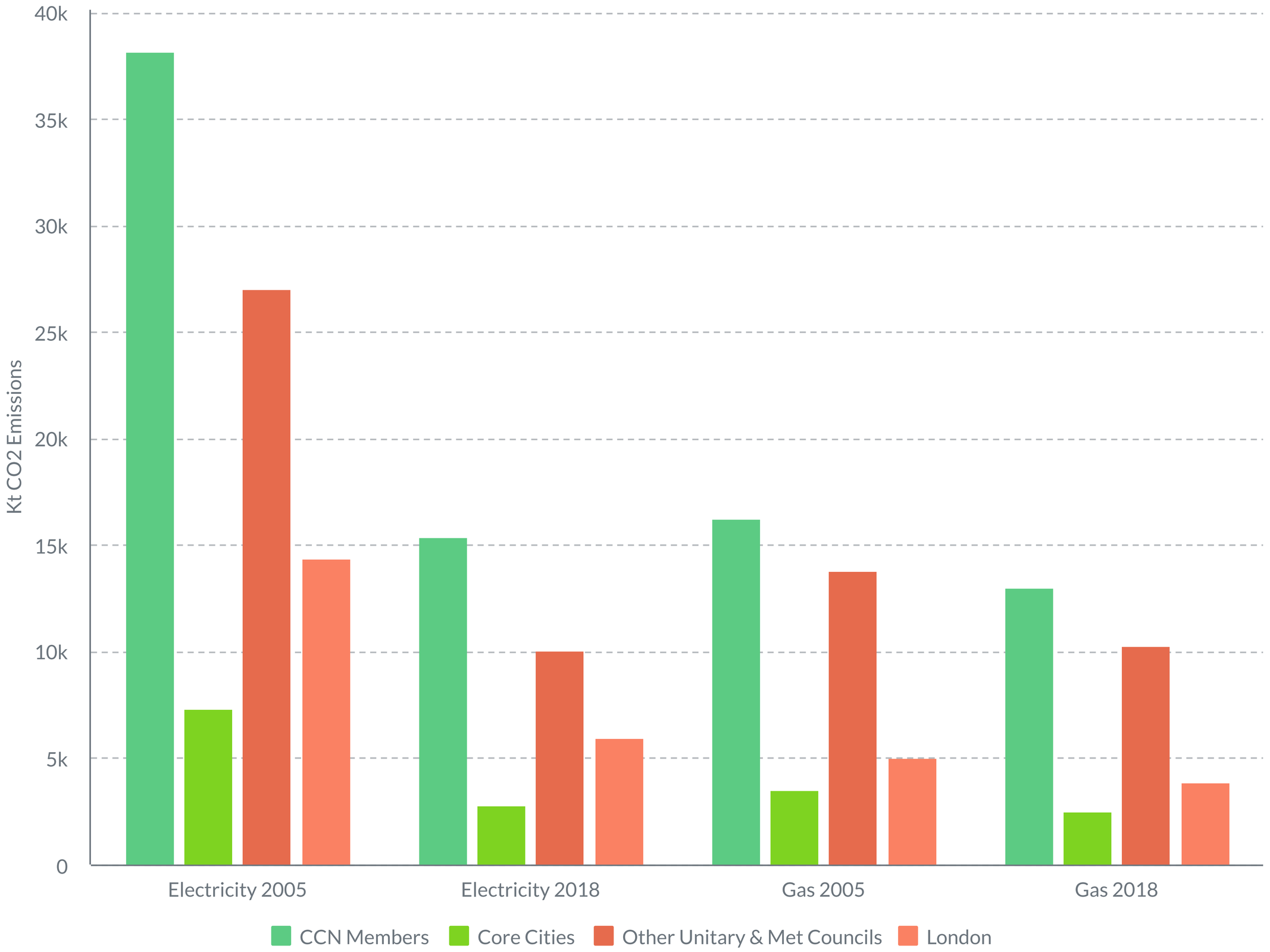
Agriculture emissions contribute a significant proportion of this variance in business and commercial emissions. Agriculture in CCN authorities contribute 90% of all agriculture local authority influenceable emissions in England and has risen by 2% over the period 2005-2018. Therefore, given agriculture is largely present in CCN authorities we have studied these emissions in a separate section which follows below.

Electricity and gas emissions are the remaining material sources of emissions reported within the business and commercial sector. The graphs below show that CCN members authorities account for the largest proportion of emissions from both electricity and gas, and that gas emissions have reduced at a slower pace than other areas.

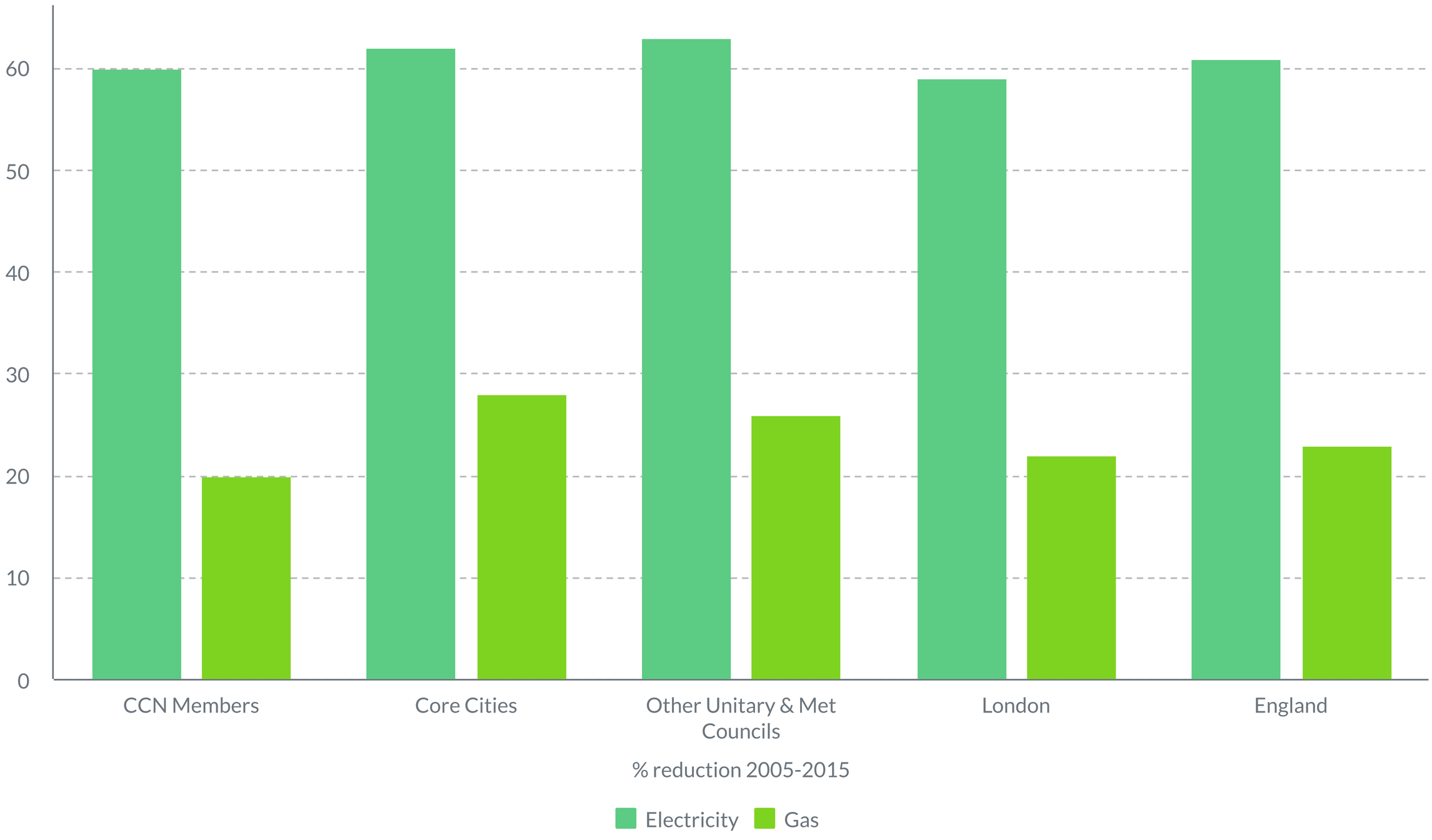
Exploring emissions further within CCN member authority areas, figures below show that whilst emissions reduction in electricity are broadly consistent and comparable to the England average, significant variation exists in the rate or emissions reductions in respect of gas, with some areas increasing emissions in the period 2005-2018.

A number of factors are likely to contribute to this variation. Firstly, the type of business or commercial activity located in each area, and the size of business is the most important viable. Research by Grant Thornton for CCN showed that the business footprint in county areas was different to city and metropolitan areas and that compared to the other council types, county authorities have higher levels of employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining, quarrying and utilities.

Graph 12 - LA influenceable emissions, Industry & Commercial 2005 - 2018

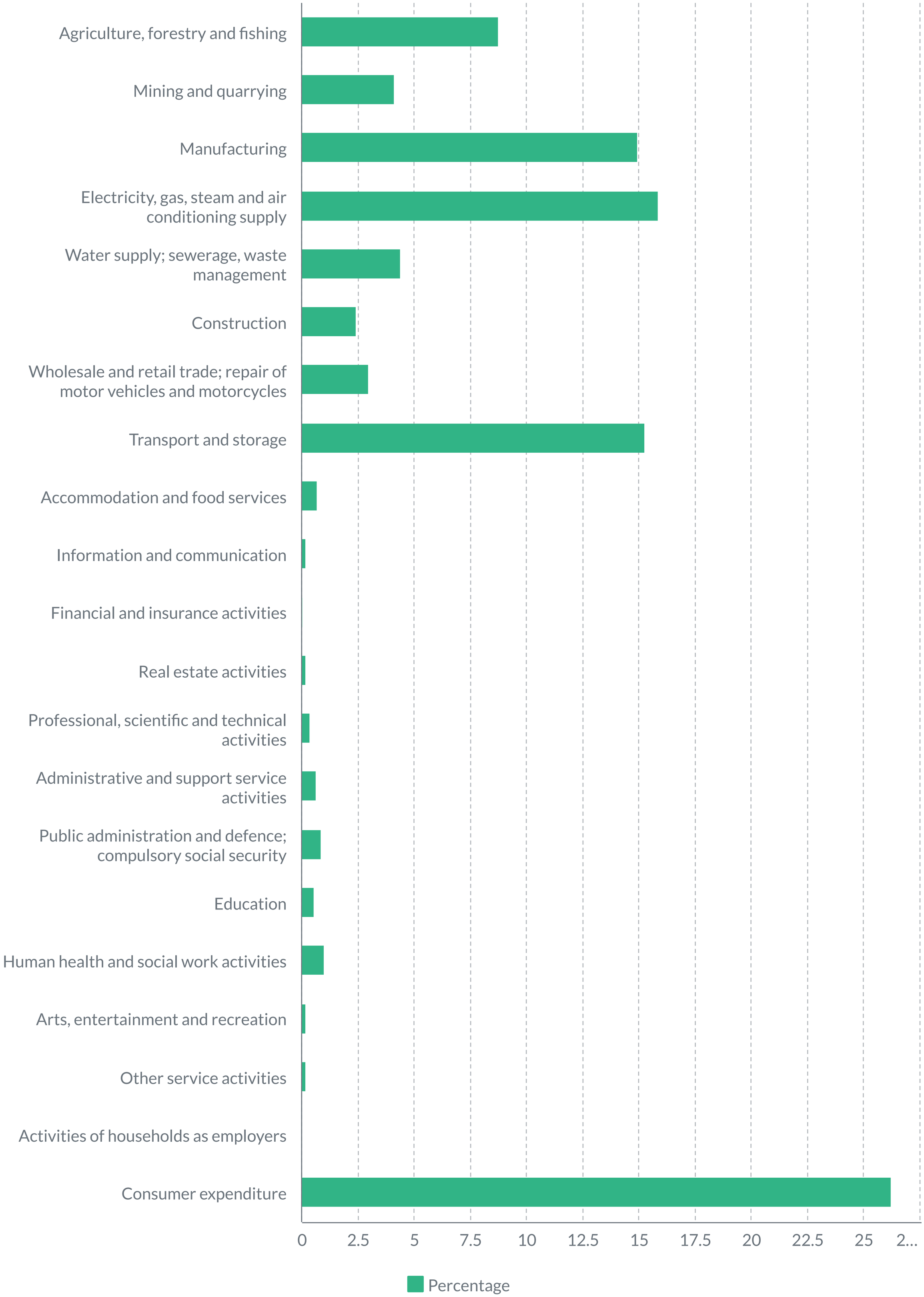


Graph 13 - LA influenceable emissions Industry & Commercial Gas & Electricity



Graph 14 - CO2 Industry & Commercial Electricity & Gas Emissions Reduction 2005 - 2018

Graph 15 - GHG emissions by Industry Sector



It is noteworthy that those industries in CCN areas which employ a larger proportion of the working population relative to other areas are also accountable for significantly greater levels of GHG emissions.

The Government's Community Renewal Fund Prospectus shows that, alongside business type, businesses in CCN areas are smaller, have a lower GVA per employee, and the new business formation rate is lower. Assessing these combined factors could point to the economic situation where many good and stable businesses exist in CCN areas that are vital for the local economy, but that because of their size and nature a specific set of economic challenges exist that prevent their early participation in climate change activity.

For example, profits and the scope for investment in new technologies and innovation is limited in the current commercial climate, supported by the evidence that returns in Services industries typically have been higher than manufacturing based industries over the last 5 years [16].

According to DEFRA's Rural Proofing Report, March, 2021 [17], in the year 2019 to 2020 there were 551,000 businesses registered in rural areas, accounting for 23% of all registered businesses in England. Proportionately more people employed by businesses registered in rural areas (71%) work in SMEs than do those in urban areas (41%) – in other words, fewer people in rural areas work in enterprises with more than 250 employees.

Looking at how climate change action is inter-related, this business mix could be a contributing factor to why ULEVs as company cars are less prevalent in county areas relative to metropolitan areas.

CCN member authorities are using their strong relationships with business to design and deliver climate change action. The example below shows how Councils are working with business to facilitate change at a local level.

[16] ONS report – Profitability of UK Companies – December 2020 - https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/bulletins/profitabilityofukcompanies/octobertodecember2019
[17] Defra Rural Proofing in England report – March 2021 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/982484/Rural_Proofing_Report_2020.pdf

Hampshire County Council

Runway's End Outdoor Centre located in Aldershot, has become 'carbon neutral' as part of ambitious plans to become an 'eco-centre' offering environmentally themed education programmes and activities for young people across the county.

Runway's End is one of four facilities managed by Hampshire County Council's Outdoor Centres team. The centre offers a range of outdoor activities for young people which includes hosting school groups for residential stays, as well as family accommodation, group training days, facility hire and hall hire (with COVID-19 measures in place where required).

Following a calculation of all its activities, Runway's End has now met the standard required to be awarded Carbon Neutral status by Carbon Neutral Britain. This means the centre's carbon emissions – estimated to be equivalent to 3,410,991 smartphone charges - are offset via carbon reduction projects.

Hertfordshire County Council

The Hertfordshire Leaders Group, attended by all council leaders, agreed to establish the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) in January 2020. HCCSP's aim is to share information, coordinate and influence solutions, and bring forward proposals for key interventions around climate change and sustainability across Hertfordshire.

The Strategic Water Action Plan was prepared with engagement from water companies, the Environment Agency and lead local flood authority. The plan was approved by HCCSP in January, subject to consultation with strategic planning groups across the county.

Key features:

- optimise use of building regulations
- improve consultation and engagement with water companies and the Environment Agency on local plans
- improve consistency on planning policy
- behavioural change campaigns

Key Messages - Business & Commercial

01

The mix and nature of business in CCN member authorities makes it more difficult for businesses to embrace the climate change agenda

02

Businesses tend to be smaller, focussed at manufacturing rather than services, make lower return, are growing less, are more established, and as a result have less available capital to invest in new equipment and energy transfers

03

The take up of ULEV company cars illustrates the nature of business and investment capability relative to urban businesses

04

There is significant variation in the reductions in emissions to date, particularly in relation to gas emissions which suggests much deeper investigation and support needs to be given at a locality/place level if emissions targets are to be reached

05

Targeted business support initiatives beyond traditional private finance mechanisms will need to be provided to incentivise businesses that are high gas consumers to enable them to remain viable and sustainable in their current locations

06

8. Examining the Key Themes: Agriculture & Land Use

Agriculture is responsible for 9% of all Greenhouse Gas emissions in the UK. Together with related emissions from changing land use and cutting down forests, it accounts for around 30% of Green House Gas emissions globally. Some 90% of local authority influenceable emissions in agriculture come from CCN areas and there has been a 2% growth in this type of emissions from 2005 to 2018, with a consistent pattern across all CCN authorities.

Many of CCN areas are largely rural in nature, have a higher proportion of agricultural land and, thus, reducing emissions from agriculture and land use is mainly a CCN member authority issue. It, therefore, goes without saying that changes to agriculture and land use are critical to county and unitary authorities' ability to reduce carbon emissions and hit their zero carbon targets. Indeed, CCN members are significant owners of farmland in their own right and, thus, have significant interest in reducing carbon from land use.

Reducing carbon emissions from land use requires consideration of a number of factors, including provision of support to farmers, information and education, using land efficiently, rules for large retailers and supermarkets, eating more local and seasonal food, making low carbon food more affordable, some (but less) meat, considering net zero as part of planning policy and new developments, including support for allotments. Also, an essential consideration is the distance food travels from source to plate – food miles, in order to start to impact on carbon emissions.

BOX 5 - *National Audit Office – Achieving Net Zero, December 2020*

The targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions through agriculture are challenging, including:

- 75% uptake of on-farm practices to reduce emissions (such as changes to waste/manure management).
- 20% reduction in consumption of beef, lamb and dairy resulting in reductions in UK cattle and sheep numbers and size of grassland areas.
- Reduced food waste leading to reduction in arable food production.

Land Use, Change and Forestry (LULUCF) targets include:

- Tree planting rates corresponding to over 40,000 football pitches worth of trees per year by 2050; active management of woodlands.
- Trees planted on 10% of farmland, hedgerow coverage increased by 40%.
- Restoration of over 50% of peatland.
- Release of around 20% of agricultural land.

(Source: National Audit Office – Achieving Net Zero, December 2020)

The views and expertise of the farming community and land users will be critical to the success of carbon reduction initiatives across this sector.

Farming has a unique part to play in absorbing (or 'sequestering') carbon emissions and is unique as an industry in being able to offer these opportunities. The farming community is uniquely placed to develop and introduce solutions, across the sector.

For example, carbon dioxide can be removed from the atmosphere by soils, by plant and crop growing cycles and by woodland. This can help 'balance' the cycle of GHGs in the atmosphere and help prevent climate change.

BOX 6 - The Climate Assembly

The Climate Assembly recommended some key factors that would drive change in the agricultural community, including:

- Food labelling to identify carbon emissions in production of the item;
- Skills training to encourage low-carbon farming practices;
- Low carbon farming regulations;
- Paying landowners to absorb and store carbon;
- Giving contractual preference to low carbon food producers;
- Changing planning rules to encourage sustainable food production;
- Tax and incentives for reducing food waste and for low carbon foods.

Climate Assembly members recommended a future for food, farming, and land use in the UK, centred around:

- Identification of community benefits (local food production, local produce, reduce "food miles)";
- Changes in diet;
- Managed diversity of land use;
- Education & skills;
- Communications & best practice;
- Behaviours.

Other drivers of change include:

- Local produce and local food production – assembly members noted potential community benefits, fairer prices for farmers, a 'feel good factor' and reduced environmental impacts;
- A change in diet to reduce meat and dairy consumption by between 20% and 40% – the assembly stressed the significance of education, saying these changes should be voluntary rather than compulsory;
- A "managed diversity" of land use, including steps such as restoring woodlands, peatlands and gorse lands.

Assembly members highlighted the need for the above to be combined with measures to support farmers to make the transition and ensure changes do not disproportionately affect the less well off.

The Farm Carbon Toolkit aims to encourage the awareness of climate change within the UK farming community and support farmers who understand the importance of taking action to reduce GHG emissions from their farming operations.

The Farm Carbon Toolkit states that:

- Carbon management on-farms is complex, there needs to be a multi - dimensional strategy that involves farmers, advisors, researchers and policy makers to achieve reduction targets. However although complex, the time to act is now;
- Soil health is of critical importance and is at the centre of profitable, resilient and sustainable farm businesses. We must protect it at all costs.
- Farmers provide an invaluable knowledge source on what works on the ground. They should be co-creating research projects that fit industry need;
- It is crucially important to highlight positive stories and engage with farmers in a positive way;
- A consistent carbon foot printing methodology that includes soil carbon and is practical at farm level is urgently required;
- Credibility, practical knowledge and relationship with the farmer are all crucial attributes to people communicating mitigation opportunities.

Cheshire East Council

Cheshire East Council has introduced the concept of “in-setting”, introducing peat restoration, nature-based carbon capture, tree and hedgerow planting in areas across the borough, development of a solar farm and district heating scheme (in contrast to “offsetting” that potentially focusses outside of a local authority area) to reduce carbon emissions and balance the zero carbon challenge. They have developed a crowd-funding platform that connects businesses who want to increase the social value of their business and allows them to “inset” their activities. Cheshire East has also introduced a sustainable farming incentive.

Wiltshire Council

Wiltshire Council has developed an infrastructure strategy The Wiltshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy that focusses on:

- Sequestration of carbon, by vegetation and well-managed soils;
- Natural water management - reducing flood risk and summer droughts, and providing cooling corridors;
- Green networks to provide opportunities for sustainable, active travel and biodiversity resilience;
- An optimal balance between food production and other land uses such as woodland creation, renewable energy generation, housing.

Key Messages - Agriculture & Land Use

01

Local produce and local food production will lead to community benefits, fairer prices for farmers, a ‘feel good factor’ and reduced environmental impacts

02

A change in diet to reduce meat and dairy consumption by between 20% and 40% will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions

03

A “managed diversity” of land use is important, including steps such as restoring woodlands, peatlands and gorse lands

04

Land-owners are best placed to drive the low carbon agenda in their areas

05

As land owners in their own right, CCN member authorities have a special role to play

06

Tax and incentives should be developed in order to encourage lower carbon methods of farming and land use

9. Examining Key Themes: Attitudes & Behaviours

The need to influence the choices and decisions that people make is critical to meet the UK's net zero targets. We know that people respond differently to persuasion and direction - the concept of using behavioural science to inform our delivery strategies and influence the choices and decisions that people make is not new.

Climate change presents bigger challenges for us, where the implications of failure are potentially catastrophic. It therefore follows that to achieve the societal shift required, we need a deeper understanding of what motivates people to change and use this data to design the most effective delivery strategies.

The Committee on Climate Change reported the potential to deliver emissions savings, just by changing the way we use our homes. "Behaviour change can deliver operational cost savings in the region of £0.4bn per year."

The UK Government agreed to the formation of a Citizen's Assembly on climate change in 2019. In its report, the Citizen's Assembly stressed that:

> *"Citizens have a crucial role to play. The way we live our lives, what we buy, how we travel and what we eat will all have an influence. So it is essential to work with citizens to make sure their views are heard, and develop strategies that fit with people's lives and aspirations."*

When the climate change action plans produced by the UK local authorities are analysed, most focus on "supply" issues - "what initiatives and infrastructures will we implement to manage climate change?" Very few focus on the "demand" factors – "how will we encourage citizens to take up the initiatives on offer?". In order to answer this question, it is important to understand the way that people behave and live their lives.

Our research has identified that differences exist in the attitudes and values between those living urban and rural environments, and how this may influence the delivery approach of climate change initiatives. The survey results from Britain Talks Climate showed that climate change is a topic of high concern to rural citizens (87%) across the political spectrum.

BOX 7 - Britain Talks Climate Survey

The Britain Talks Climate, survey by Climate Outreach (2020) identified that rural citizens are more engaged than urban:

- 60% of rural citizens think that we are already feeling the effects of climate change (56% urban);
- Rural citizens have high civic and political participation, 64% donated to charity (54% urban);
- 54% voted in local elections (50% urban);
- 45% have signed a petition (39% urban);
- 22% volunteered in their local community (15% urban);
- 85% agree that “too much in our country is decided in London”;
- 50% say “the area where I live has been neglected for a long time”.

In respect of nearly every climate change initiative from recycling to reducing plastic consumption to insulating homes, people in rural areas were more supportive of action than in urban areas. Only in the areas of reducing car usage and transitioning to electric vehicles was there less appetite in rural areas, most likely for the practical reasons already outlined in this report.

The conclusion we can draw is that there is a greater willingness for rural citizens to engage with and take up climate change actions, if we can engage and communicate in the right way and support change through the right mechanisms and incentives.

We have used research by Cultural Dynamics [19] to explore the values and motivations of people living in urban and rural settings using the Values Modes segmentation tool. This tool builds on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and segments people based on their values and beliefs into “Pioneers”, Prospectors” and “Settlers”.

In rural and village areas the research shows that *Settlers* and *Pioneers* are more prevalent and paints a more complex picture in designing climate change initiatives that citizens will work to implement.

Pioneers need to be actively involved in the design of the solution - consultation is not sufficient - because of their strong sense of self efficacy. Pioneers will expect to be invited to make their contribution to the solutions of the issues raised. They are knowledgeable and open to more knowledge. They will have already been thinking about the issues the councils will be raising – it is their lived experience. They are most likely to adopt new approaches to old problems and/or be comfortable with novel solutions to new problems.

[19] Cultural Dynamics and Values Modes - http://www.cultdyn.co.uk/valuesmodes.html

The Pioneers are likely to come up with many workable solutions that don't fit pre-existing council driven solutions. Good listening and feedback mechanisms by the council will encourage uptake as the Pioneers will tend to be over- represented in formal and informal networks in their communities and tend to have greater 'growth based" influence than other values types within their networks.

Settlers are the opposite of the Pioneers in many ways – not open to novel ideas. They are content to look the other way when confronted with new ideas and changing circumstances. Talk about climate change and they will talk about the weather – they will reduce big ideas down to little solutions. For them there is safety in the tried and tested ways – and safety is paramount to them.

Settlers will be influenced by those close to them, family and friends. They are mostly content with their lives as they are. They will defend what is right for them in their circumstances as they see it and will be difficult to shift in terms of behaviour and attitudes. Different influencing techniques will be required to shift the decisions that Settlers make.

But they also want to be seen as 'normal' and will follow trends (often previously driven by Pioneers) as they become established. Their networks tend to be smaller and with more like-minded people. They can be resistant to 'outside opinion' and for any mass campaign to succeed Settler influencers will be needed.

Whilst this research does not advocate stereotyping people, it is nevertheless true that research suggests that people living in urban areas are motivated by different things to those who live in rural areas. Local knowledge and local networks therefore become essential to the design and delivery of climate change initiatives. The differences in attitudes and behaviours can be best understood by local councils and they will be the best placed to drive the change required to deliver this complex challenge.

National targets and policies need to maintain the flexibility to be interpreted and delivered differently in different communities in order to achieve net zero. BEIS recognises the importance of engaging the public to achieve net zero and has recently begun considering how to do this in in a coordinated way.

The NAO recommends that BEIS with support from other departments should "establish a public engagement strategy that sets out how the Government will ensure ongoing buy-in to the changes required by the transition to net zero" including "how it will tailor its messages for audiences with different characteristics, including ethnic minorities, age groups, geographical locations, and income levels"

What is important here and implied but not explicitly stated, is that the Government considers the differences in people from different places and selects the appropriate messengers and mechanisms through which influence is best used to deliver net zero in CCN areas.

CCN member authorities are already recognising and leading on the challenges and opportunities of engaging local communities, but this needs to be supported by creativity and targeted interventions within the scope of then emerging government delivery plans.

CCN Survey Results

1 Role clarification

In the survey undertaken for this report, respondents identified that the success of climate change action is very dependent on the changing behaviour of citizens and businesses and said that government needs to clarify the roles and accountabilities of public sector bodies to ensure consistency of communication and engagement with stakeholders and the public.

2 Education on behavioural change

One respondent highlighted the need for 'educating the public on the need for behaviour change, especially around reduced private car use and shift to active travel'

Key Messages - Attitudes & Behaviour

01

Delivery of climate change needs to be at a local level, taking into account behavioural and societal differences

02

Citizens need to believe that they are fundamental to the solution design

03

Surveys show that people in rural areas are more receptive to climate change initiatives relative to urban areas with the exception of car ownership

04

The values and motivations of people that live in rural areas are different to those that live in urban areas

05

How we engage with people to adopt climate change initiatives in CCN member areas has to be different to the approach taken in urban areas, it has to be more local and more co-productive recognising the knowledge and experience of the individuals that live in these places

06

Traditional approaches to engagement are unlikely to be successful in accelerating climate change take up to meet the Government's targets

10. Examining the Key Themes: Funding

The Committee for Climate Change states:

> “the Balanced Pathway to deliver our recommendations involves a large and sustained increase in investment, adding around £50 Billion annually by 2030. The largest increases are for low carbon power capacity, retrofit of buildings and infrastructure for electric vehicles.”

It is suggested that most of this investment will be forthcoming from the private sector, but this significantly underplays both the role of local government in the delivery of climate change initiatives and the mechanisms that need to be in place to ensure that the costs and benefits are distributed fairly in society.

The UK Government has recently doubled its commitment to £11.6 billion in aggregate between 2021/22 and 2025/26, but the details of how this investment will be allocated, and what will flow through local government is not yet clear. This level of funding falls way short of the CCC recommendations and assuming local government receives only a proportion of this funding, will significantly undermine local government’s contribution to delivering climate change on the ground.

The Sixth Carbon Budget shows that surface transportation, building and electricity supply require the lion’s share of investment over the next 20 years, all areas where local government has a key role to play in terms of design, planning, delivery and local engagement. The return on investment is long term and suggests that the benefits will be generated in quite differing proportion to the investment. This is likely to impact on private sector funding initiatives in considering how to price in risk, take up and ROI.

What has yet to be outlined is the investment required to be made by the private citizen or by the businesses in order to change their operating arrangements. This key economic question will very much drive the demand side of climate change initiatives and additionally makes the situation more challenging when we consider fairness and equality within the funding equation.

Funding for reducing carbon emissions should be directed to where the biggest impact can be made and where the biggest challenges need to be overcome. This report has highlighted that CO2 emissions are proportionally higher in CCN member authorities. It has shown that the initiatives recommended to reduce emissions are harder to adopt due to lower wages, poorer access to public transport, and distances to access core facilities including education, work and shopping. Furthermore, business have less investment capacity and agriculture is a key challenge for CCN areas. There are not just physical factors which influence climate change but emotional ones as the core attitudes and values of people differ in rural areas to those in urban areas and need different engagement mechanisms.

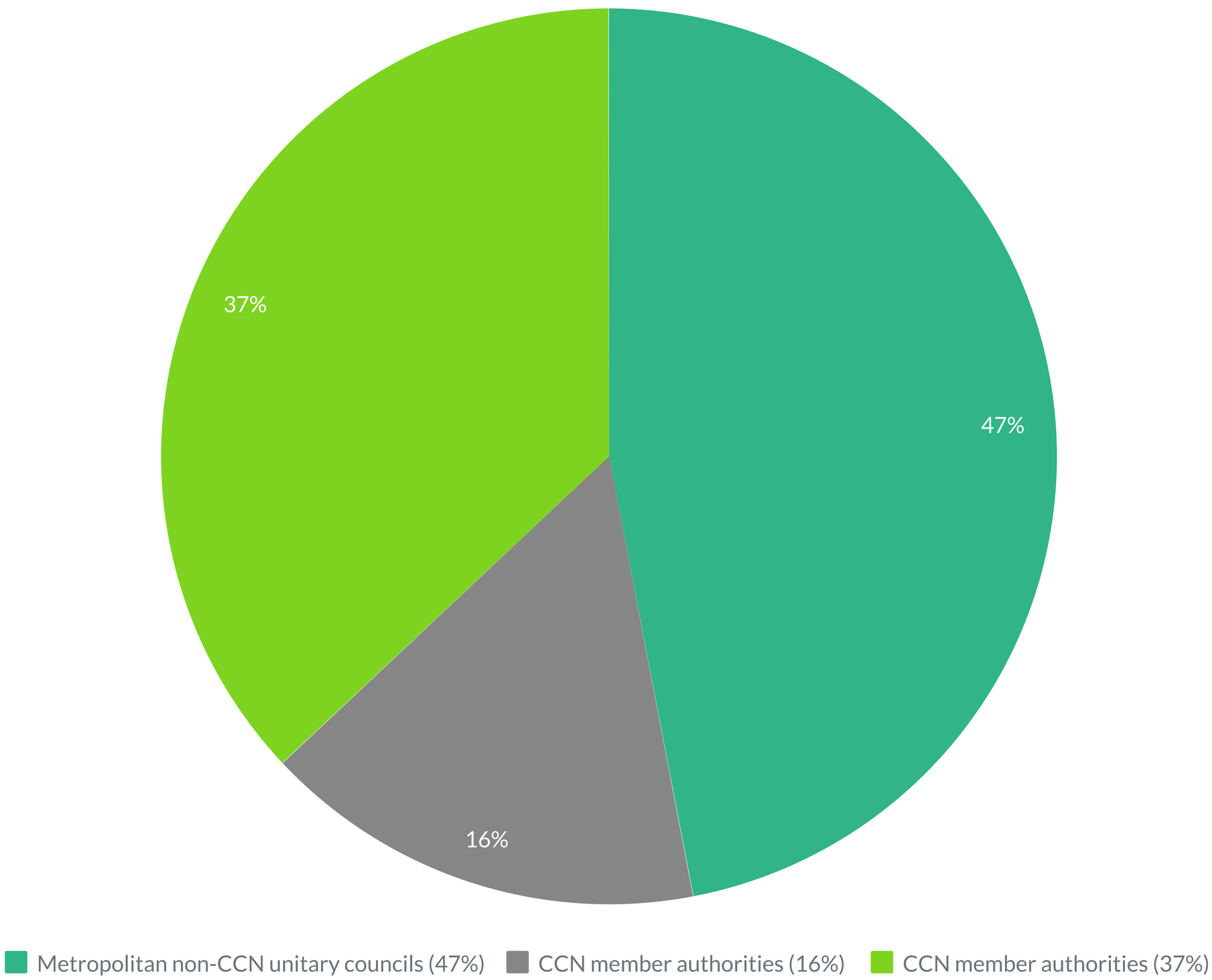
CCN member authorities account for 53% of local authority influenceable emissions, but if we explore recent initiatives to support climate change, we see a pattern of funding that is not reflective of that need. Given the financial pressures councils have faced over the past decade, and the recent impact of Covid-19, it is important that funding to support climate change reflects both the revenue and capital investment required to build new skills, design and manage scheme delivery, incentivise business and private citizens, and put in place the required infrastructure.

Set out below are examples of where funding to CCN areas has not reflected the scale of the climate change challenge that exists. Appropriate funding to CCN areas will create the necessary leverage to promote and deliver a co-ordinated, targeted and successful climate change strategy at a local level.

Looking at the recent allocation of Round 1 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, of the £997million total grant allocated to public sector bodies only £152 million (15.6%) was allocated to CCN authorities. Whilst it is recognised that organisations were required to bid for funds, this suggests that the investment need in county areas is not reflected in the design, promotion, or decision-making arrangements within such schemes.

This preliminary study has explored the current level of investment on climate change activity at a local authority level, but as other research papers have already established, the reporting mechanisms/requirements are not yet in place to analyse spending with any degree of certainty or consistency.

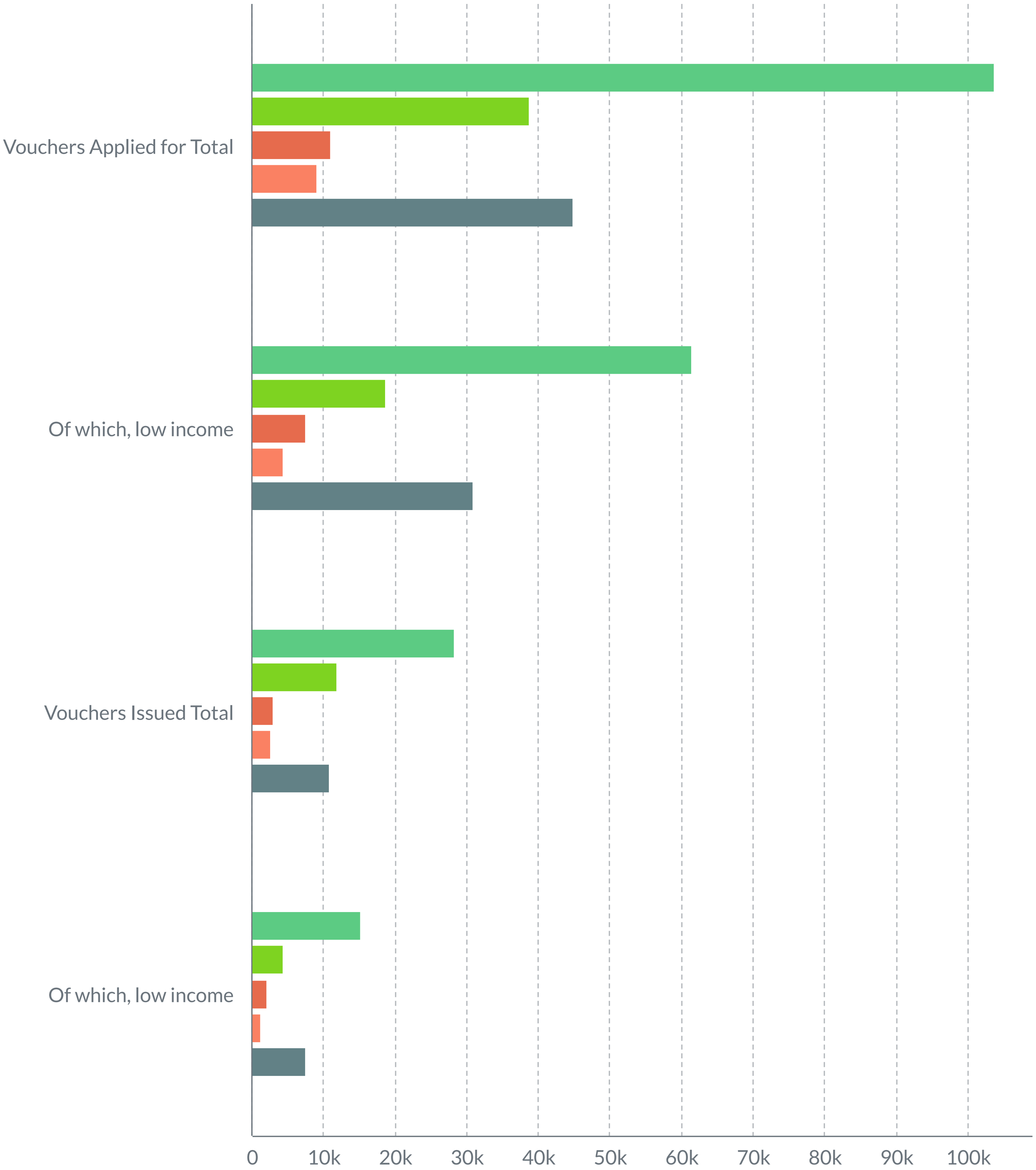
Graph 16 - £64m allocated via Cycling & Walking to Work Fund 2017-2020



Strategic approach to funding

Our recent survey of CCN member authorities has identified the lack of strategic direction and the lack of certainty and longevity of funding streams as a key barrier to delivering climate change initiatives. Many of the respondents were unaware of the budget allocated to climate change activities in their council or the amount spent against the budget. There is no dedicated strategic funding available to support climate change action, and with increasing pressure on council budgets from social care services and recovering from the financial cost of COVID-19, the cash available to adequately design and deliver climate change initiatives is severely constrained.

Graph 17 - Green Homes Grant Vouchers February 2021



CCN Survey Results

01

In a recent survey of CCN members, only 46% were able to identify **revenue and/or capital budgets allocated to tackling climate change**

02

Most respondents were keen to see a **clear and properly funded roadmap**

03

When asked what would you like to see emerging at a national level to increase the chance of success of achieving Net Zero in your place? A respondent said: **“Clear and consistent policy supported by adequate funding to support communities and individuals to take personal action”**

Our research has identified 14 different funding streams over and above core funding which CCN member authorities are currently using to support climate change action.

All of these schemes require bids to be prepared, separate monitoring arrangements to be put in place, partnerships to be developed and administrative activity. This could be put to better use in delivering cohesive and locally prioritised schemes that make a faster impact on reducing emissions. The current approach drives a piecemeal approach to deliver where the opportunity to follow through on major strategic initiatives is severely compromised by the fragmentation of the government grants system.

The funding schemes identified by this research is unlikely to be exhaustive and does not include many schemes administered directly by government departments or appointed administrative bodies. The grants identified include:

Table 5 - Funding Streams

Transport	**Domestic**	**Industry & Commerical**
On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme	Green Homes Grant	LoCASE Business Growth & Innovation Grant
DFT Access Fund for Sustainable Travel	Warm Homes Fund	Green Recovery Challenge Fund
Workplace Charging Scheme	Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund	
Cycling & Walking		
Ultra-Low Emission Taxi Scheme		

Capacity Development	**Local Authority Estate**
LGA & UCL Net Zero Innovation Programme	Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme
	Low Carbon Skills Fund
	Salix Energy Efficiency Funding

These grants are just some available and are not accessed by every CCN member authority in equal measure. The competitive principles of the bidding processes mean that councils take a tactical approach based on the bidding criteria rather than a strategic approach based on local need and a prioritised approach to emissions reductions. Those councils that are good at producing bid documentation have a better chance of success.

Key Messages - Funding

01

The level of data and performance management relating to climate change action is not sufficient to manage a programme of activity that needs to deliver a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035

02

Broad estimates of total investment have been made by the Committee on Climate Change which suggest that the majority of this funding will come from private finance

03

The level of investment businesses and citizens will need to make in climate change has yet to be realistically assessed, and major concerns exist that if left to private finance alone climate change action will only increase inequality for low income and hard to reach families

04

An analysis of grant funding distribution (where this has been accessible) suggests that CCN members authorities have a lower level of funding relative to urban authorities which does not correlate with either the scale or difficult of emissions reduction

05

Longer term certainty of funding will be required in order to stimulate the supply chain and ensure the take up of Government initiatives

11. Conclusions & Recommendations

Seizing the opportunity to deliver climate change in CCN member authorities

This report has outlined some of the unique challenges that must be considered in designing the delivery strategies for climate change. Further work needs to be undertaken to investigate what local measures and actions are required to shift societal behaviour and decision making to embrace climate change action, and to determine how best CCN member authorities can use their powers, services and networks of influence to best effect.

Nevertheless, there are clear messages that come through in this report that result in a set of preliminary recommendations for both Government and CCN member authorities.

The UK Government could make a big impact on climate change by focussing more effort on the practical challenges CCN member authorities face and designing initiatives that reflect the unique circumstances of each place. To ignore these differences could further exacerbate inequality and undermine the levelling up agenda.

Tangible opportunities exist that can be built upon with the right initiatives co-produced with citizens and businesses.

UK100 research has shown that rural residents are particularly concerned about environmental issues [20]. Based on the geography and demography of CCN member areas, this research would suggest that residents are committed to climate change action – there is a greater appetite to support climate change action in rural areas, and with the right engagement mechanisms this momentum can be harnessed.

The survey by Britain Talks Climate, 2020 identified that rural citizens are worried about environmental issues, with high concern about:

- The natural environment (92%);
- Plastic pollution (91%);
- Deforestation (93%);
- Air pollution (90%).

[20] UK100 – Rural Attitudes to Climate Change – February 2021 - https://www.uk100.org/publications/rural-attitudes-climate-change

CCN member authorities are already taking action and want to work with Government. Whilst the vast majority of local authorities have declared a climate emergency and committed to net zero carbon emissions, the declarations do not always flow down into wider council policy.

Despite this, many CCN member authorities are putting climate change at the heart of their decision making. For example, Cornwall Council has developed a decision-making tool that encompasses sustainability as a key factor in all major decisions.

The influence that local authorities have through being the local decision makers and the size and scale of CCN member authorities make them critical to the green energy agenda. They have responsibility for 86% of the landmass in England and therefore are instrumental in the decision making and engagement with citizens regarding increasing windfarms and solar farms and improving biodiversity.

With an estimated fourfold increase in electricity generation required, much of this coming from solar and wind farms, it is essential to avoid costly and long running planning disputes regarding the delivery of the necessary infrastructure at the pace and scale required.

There is a clear role and opportunity for CCN member authorities as leaders of their place in developing focussed strategies that gain the support of people rather than generate opposition and limited take up of initiatives. Due to the complex governance arrangements of county and district councils, it is clear that this needs to be done in collaboration with the other tier councils. CCN areas have the added complexity of working across town, villages and rural places but their strength lies in their ability to be the convener and bring people together which will be a key part of this journey.

Other opportunities for central government to work with CCN member authorities and businesses is to design radical new transport solutions that are focussed on connecting towns and villages. Many CCN member authorities are already investing in promoting active transport (cycling and walking) to reduce emissions and promote healthy lifestyles. With imagination and funding to support infrastructure growth, aligned to demand side investment, we could see new solutions developed in towns that move business and citizens to accelerate the use of ULEV's, increase the use of public transport, and switch big business to electric vehicles in rural communities.

It should be acknowledged that to some degree the focus and funding of air quality improvement measures have understandably largely targeted urban areas and cities, the bi-product of improving air quality being to reduce GHG emissions, particularly in the area of transport. What is required now is an equal and proportional focus on the pressing issues facing CCN member authorities in their attempts to reduce carbon emissions.

Other aspects of local government's remit pose opportunities through their responsibility for the delivery of many aspects of the government's policies, particularly in respect of public health, social care, economic growth etc. There are multiple co-benefits that can be gained by designing and implementing place-based strategies that align specific initiatives. For example, active travel has benefits for health and the environment, if schemes are aligned and targeted correctly.

Retrofitting homes can support independent living for individuals on the edge of care and correctly aligned with commissioning can increase independence and reduce social care costs, and so on. The real danger is that if funding is devolved from government in a restrictive and short-term manner that does not allow local adaptation, it will be difficult for councils to deliver these co-benefits.

CCN members understand the responsibilities that are in their immediate control but also have a deeper understanding of their communities and of the local economic challenges in their places. Therefore, they are better placed to judge the reality of the economic impact of climate change action on their citizens. As citizens seek to find additional finance to retrofit homes, buy electric vehicles, etc, the consequential financial hardship created by additional debt may further increase inequality in CCN areas where average family incomes are lower than in urban areas. The opportunity exists now to work with CCN member authorities in devising the appropriate incentive structures and financing mechanisms to deliver practical solutions that do not exacerbate inequality at a time when we are “levelling up”.

Through their understanding of their local economy there are further opportunities where CCN member authorities can help in delivering climate change as they understand the importance of traditional, small, local businesses that create a thriving local ecosystem in rural areas. Many of these businesses support the heritage and agriculture of our nation but they are small and lack the capability to access private finance to make wholescale changes to the way they operate – they simply do not operate in the way that big corporate businesses do. Working with CCN member authorities, new schemes could be designed to use a variety of levers including Business Rates, grants support, etc. to support business to change, without putting their businesses financially at risk.

This report makes clear the overwhelming evidence that CCN member authorities must play a significant role in delivering climate change and utilise their role as an investor, convenor, regulator, innovator, champion and guardian of fairness to deliver the UK net zero targets. They can use their roles in housing, planning, transportation, education, public health and economic growth to identify locally the optimum mechanisms to influence their local systems and achieve the net zero outcomes.

Recommendations for Government

01

That the UK Government gives more clarity on the policy, strategy and obligations relating to local government and climate change. Government should create the forum for meaningful engagement with CCN member authorities to jointly define the roles, flexibilities and contributions that they can make to build on the self-made momentum and accelerate climate change action in their areas

02

Government should move away from an overly-city focused approach, and provide the necessary amount of funding and support to county areas that addresses the size of the challenge they face. More broadly, government must set aside more funding for climate change than the £11.6bn already committed if it wants to achieve its net zero target.

03

Climate change programmes need to provide clarity of funding and certainty to the supply chain and demand side to increase the participation in action. Programmes should therefore be longer term with appropriate funds committed over the programme period to provide the confidence for businesses and citizens to invest in climate action

04

CCN councils should be given greater flexibility and freedom to deliver schemes on a basis that reflects the challenges of particular communities, for example the incentives and delivery mechanisms that are needed for a coastal town like Jaywick in Essex are different to the needs of towns like Watford in Hertfordshire

05

Government should quickly establish the mechanisms for capturing and recording the performance data (finance, emissions reductions, co-benefits, etc) to support the evaluation of what works well and that initiatives can be scaled with greater certainty

Recommendations for CCN members

01

Climate change is an emergency and should be treated as such. Those authorities that are yet to declare a climate emergency should do so at the earliest opportunity. Those that have declared an emergency should escalate delivery of climate emergency plans. Climate change should be included in decision making processes, funds should be identified and allocated to support climate change action against which progress on emission reduction can be monitored and evaluated.

02

Given the good practice that already exists, CCN member authorities should rapidly develop a mechanism for sharing good practice and learning from trials so that all councils can accelerate change in their place

03

Given the lack of expert resources and new skills that will need to be developed to deliver climate change action successfully, CCN member authorities should consider establishing “centres of excellence" to focus on the key areas of business and commercial, domestic, transport and agriculture emissions in order that innovation can be driven in a focussed and accelerated way for the benefit of all authorities

Contributors

Martin Cresswell and Caroline Hopkins have been delighted to work with the County Councils Network in the research and publication of this report and are hopeful that the content will drive measurable change in the delivery of zero carbon solutiuons across the Network.

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Martin is an experienced leader who relentlessly delivers organisational improvement and better performance outcomes in complex public and private sector environments.

He is well known in the public sector and renowned for navigating complex relationships, building consensus, speaking truth to power, and building strong teams to deliver change in both the public and private sector.

Martin built IMPOWER to become a leading management consultancy dedicated to delivering better public service outcomes for less.

He is passionate about the role of local authorities in climate change and how he can help them navigate the complex and difficult challenge of reaching “net zero” in their place.

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Caroline is a customer relationship professional with proven track record in the delivery of complex partnerships. She has developed and implemented complex strategies and solutions across the local authority sector.

Most recently, she has worked in the energy and services sector, helping local authority partners to develop and deliver net zero carbon strategies. She identified solutions and services that would assist key local authority partners to deliver their climate change aspirations.

CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

Founded in 1997, the County Councils Network is a network of 23 county councils and 13 unitary authorities that serve county areas. The network is a cross party organisation, expressing the views of member councils to the Local Government Association and to the government.

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