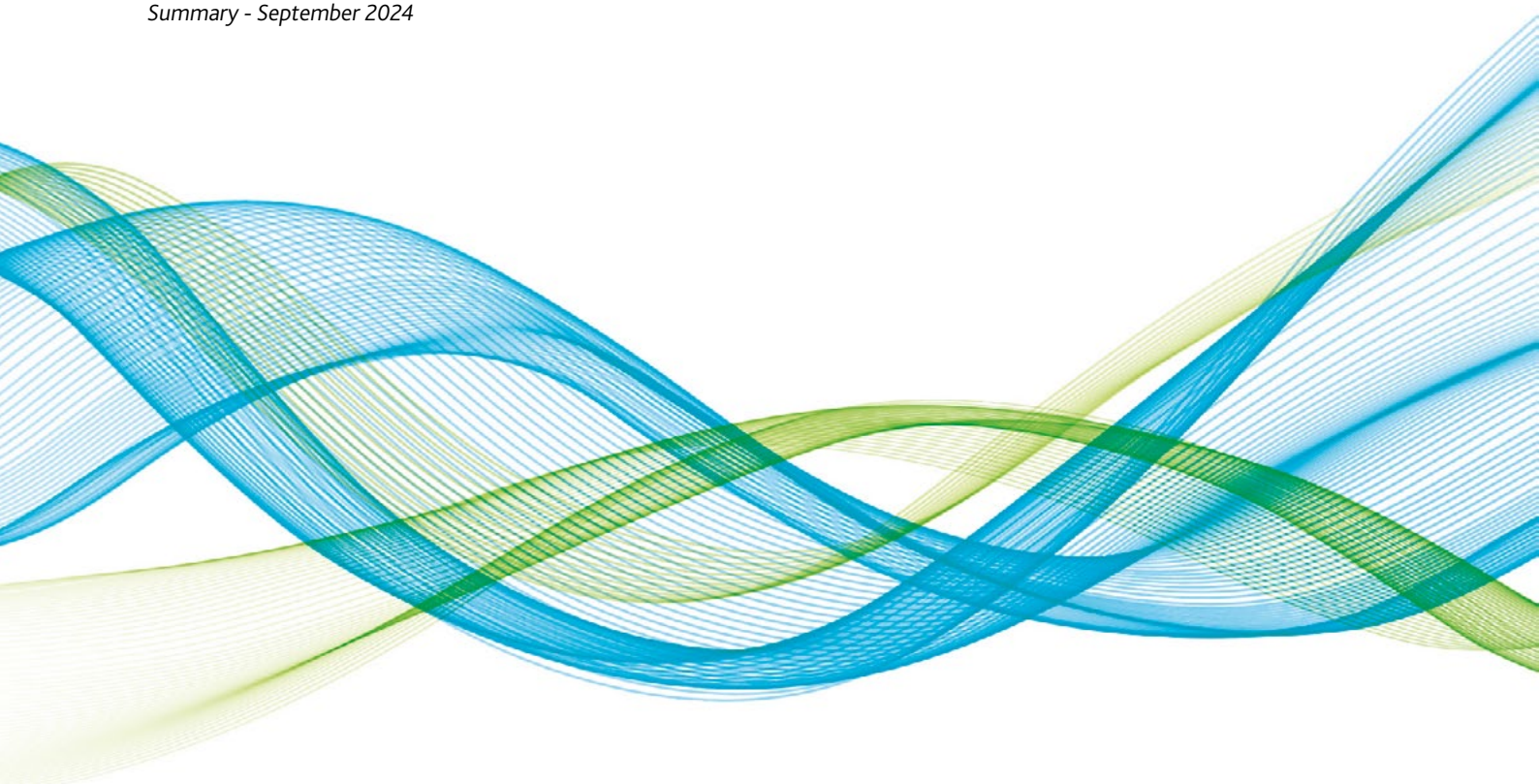


Manifesto Asks from the Blueprint Coalition



Summary - September 2024



Working together to deliver **place-based climate action**



With support from London Councils and the Local Government Association.

A blueprint for accelerating climate and nature action at the local level: summary



The Blueprint Coalition is an influential group of local government organisations, environmental groups and research institutions. Together we have set out a blueprint for how the government can accelerate action on climate and nature and create a thriving green economy at the local level.

We are calling on the new government to support local authorities in delivering action on climate adaptation and mitigation with a joined-up approach that helps nature recovery and tackles inequalities across the country.

We have identified five immediate priorities:

1. Ensure that all devolution agreements include ambitious plans and devolved powers for place-based actions to reduce carbon emissions, build climate resilience and restore nature.
2. Strengthen the proposed duty to produce local growth plans by requiring 'local sustainable growth plans' that prioritise investment in low carbon sectors and enabling a transition to higher quality, better paid jobs through reskilling, retraining and research.
3. Ensure that high energy standards for new build and environmental enhancement are at the heart of planning reform and that investment in warm homes is at the pace and scale needed, with flexibility in local implementation in order to end fuel poverty.
4. Shift emphasis within transport spend to encourage modal shift including active travel infrastructure and reversing bus service decline, while also investing in existing infrastructure assets.
5. Accelerate local nature-based solutions (including tree planting, coastal conservation and restoration of peatland and freshwater environments) in order to meet 2030 targets for nature, increase climate resilience and ensure everyone has access to high quality green and blue spaces.

Why local place-based action is essential

The UK's legally binding carbon reduction targets and its legal duty to address the risks from extreme weather and climate change can only be reached with action at the regional and local levels. Properly empowered and resourced local authorities working with a wide variety of partners within their areas - including local people, businesses, and community groups - can deliver the necessary carbon reductions, improve climate resilience, boost green growth and help tackle inequalities.

Empowering local authorities is not a 'nice to have': it is essential. Most local authorities have already developed plans to address the climate and ecological crises and they know that the best solutions require a joined-up approach. They urgently need the powers and resources to scale up action. The benefits are indisputable, including better health and wellbeing, improved access to nature, tackling inequalities, creating jobs and supporting resilient local economies.

The actions we recommend closely align with the priorities set out by the Climate Change Committee (CCC), which acknowledge the key role of local authorities and the contribution they are already making, such as insulating fuel-poor homes.

Research shows that local, place-based investment measures to meet the sixth carbon budget (e.g. heat pumps and insulation) is more cost effective than a top-down approach, requiring £58 billion instead of £195 billion. This approach would achieve nearly double the energy savings for consumers, while generating £825 billion of wider social benefits over 30 years, compared to £444 billion under a centralised approach.

Acting now will also save money later. For example, it makes no sense to build new homes now that will need expensive retrofits in the future to ensure they are warm to live in and not leaking carbon. We need to act now to make our places more resilient to the changes in our climate we are already experiencing and avoid significant costs to health and livelihoods.

Polling has shown that most people support action on climate change. And as energy prices remain volatile, polls show that people want investment in renewables and energy efficiency.

Empowering local place-based action

The Blueprint Coalition welcomes the Labour Government's recognition of the need for a place-based approach with adequate funding and support through its devolution commitments.

We welcome the commitment to reform and devolve funding streams, in particular the promise to move away from competitive funding for action on climate and nature. Such reform needs to result in clearly defined roles and responsibilities, long term stable funding with local flexibility, so that local authorities can act at the scale and pace required. This will ensure that places most in need of measures like new green space, better bus services, retrofitting cold homes and public buildings, such as schools will not continue to miss out. In addition, local authorities need support to build capacity and share best practice.

National government needs to work with local government, building on the work of the Local Net Zero Forum. However, we need to create a more genuine partnership, to fully understand the potential and challenges of local delivery and how to put place-based action at the heart of its approach to net zero, building resilient places and reducing inequalities. The CCC's [2024 progress report](#) highlights the need to rapidly accelerate action on transport, buildings, renewables and nature based solutions requiring progress on 'enablers' such as green skills and public engagement. Without strong cross departmental government action on these enablers, local authority delivery will be significantly constrained.

The government's mission to kickstart economic growth and its proposal for a local growth duty and proposed planning reforms must be aligned to the Net Zero Strategy, National Adaptation Programme, and nature recovery goals.

The transition from a high to low carbon economy will require a combination of refocused funding and new funding. The CCC has advised in the [Sixth Carbon Budget](#) that net zero by 2050 can be met with costs below 1% of GDP throughout the next 30 years. They note that there will also be considerable health and wellbeing benefits that flow from the transition.

Conclusion

The Blueprint Coalition calls on the new government to empower local authorities with the necessary resources, powers and support to drive forward climate and nature action at the local level.

The next crucial step is for national and local government to forge a genuine partnership, aligning strategies to create a coordinated, place-based approach that will accelerate progress towards net zero, enhance resilience and deliver a thriving green economy for communities across the UK.

The Blueprint Coalition

You can find out [more about the Blueprint Coalition here](#) and find our joint publications.

Any other inquiries, please email the Coalition via secretariat@adeptnet.org.uk.



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