

Supporting Local Authorities to deliver climate outcomes during a period of significant change

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Climate Change in the UK today

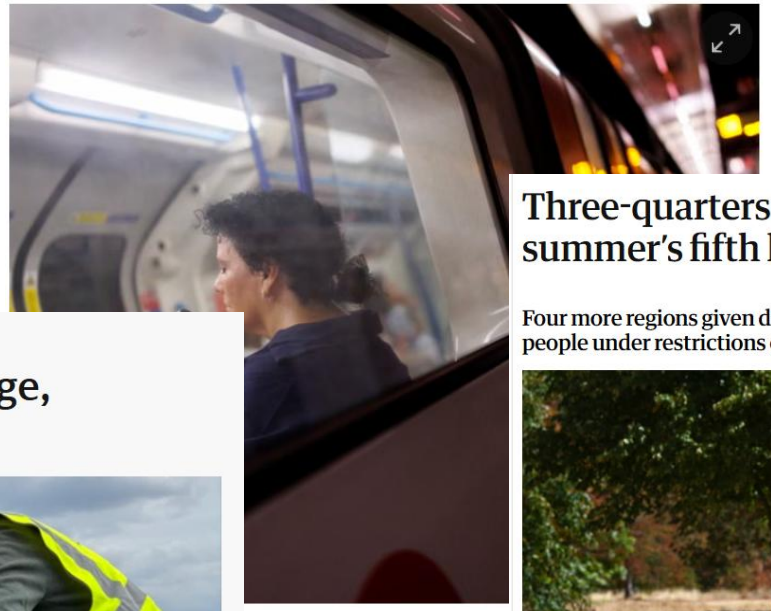


Warning more homes will be uninsurable due to flood risk

Aviva boss Amanda Blanc said England was "for sure" building homes that might be uninsurable at some poin

Summer of 2026 was UK's hottest on record, Met Office says

Meteorologists say mean average temperature of 16.5C was made 130 times more likely by climate crisis



Three-quarters of Englar summer's fifth heatwave

Four more regions given drought status, p people under restrictions on water use



There has been an unprecedented period of hot, dry weather in the UK this year. Photograph: Peter Nicholls/AFP/Getty Images

'False autumn': stressed trees drop leaves early after scorching English summer

Season will be less vibrant with trees such as birches, which usually offer a striking burst of yellow leaves, already bare

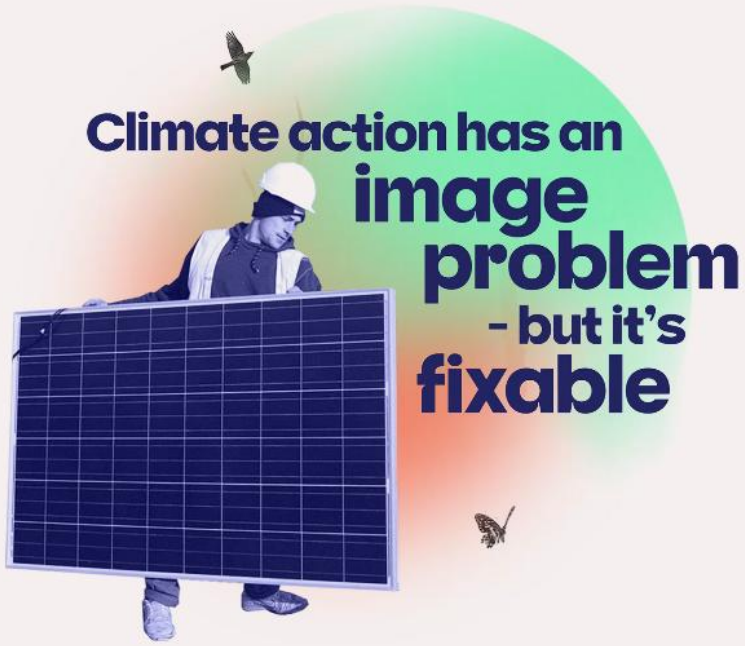


Summer wildfires caused catastrophic hidden damage, scientists warn



Professor Dave Chadwick from Bangor University sampling damaged remains following wildfires at Mynydd Llangynidr in Bannau Brycheiniog

What do the public think?



Show how tackling climate change makes lives and communities better, both by helping people adapt and reducing future harms



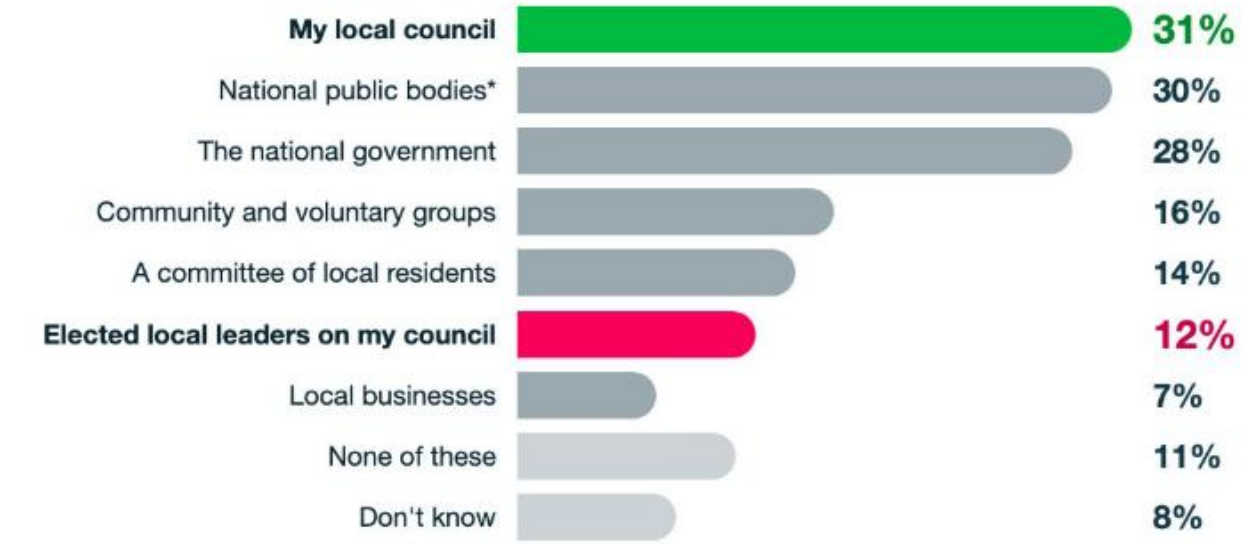
Most people don't distinguish between climate adaptation and mitigation when they are thinking about tackling climate change

What do the public think?

Your residents trust the local council most on local climate action…

but not necessarily local leaders

"When it comes to tackling climate change in your local area (e.g. improving homes, protecting green spaces, or shifting to clean energy), who do you most trust to lead that work?"



Source: Climate Barometer Wave 9, Savanta survey of 2,017 UK adults, Aug–Sep 2026. Respondents could choose up to two options, so totals exceed 100%. *e.g. the Environment Agency. Question co-designed by UK100 with Climate Barometer.

How can Aether support?

At Aether, we bring a unique combination of local authority experience, technical expertise and deep understanding of local greenhouse gas emissions data. This expertise is critically underpinned by a passion to support real outcomes for local councils and their communities.

How can Aether support?

Local Climate Action (Borough/District/Unitary/County/Strategic Authority)

- Establish Ambition and Clear Outcomes
- Who is Corporately accountable?
- Develop an Evidence Base and Risk Assessment
- Co-create resilient climate programme
- Establish clear KPIs to Monitor, Review, Adapt

Aether

Strategic Policy (e.g. Spatial Development Strategies)

- Establish Vision for SDS Area
- Agree Strategic Outcomes
- Co-create Strategic Environmental Outcomes
- Agree clear strategic KPIs & identify spatial data sets
- Embed into SDS

Case studies



NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL
Integrating GHG assessments and climate adaptation



ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL
Using scenario analysis to understand spheres of influence



ISLE OF MAN GOVERNMENT
Re-assessing what we consider to be “benefits” versus “co-benefits”

Integrating GHG assessments and climate adaptation



Background and context:

North Norfolk experiences a high rate of coastal erosion. North Norfolk District Council is part of the Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme (CTAP). It aims to accelerate strategic planning to address long-term risks and trial innovative ways of adapting to coastal change.

The Council has also declared a climate emergency and set an aspiration for its operations – including those of the Coastwise team – to be net zero by 2030.

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Environment Agency

Coastal transition accelerator programme

Part of the £200m
Flood and coastal innovation programmes

COASTWISE

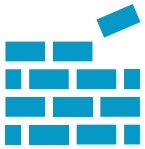
Client's requirements:

*"NNDC is seeking a **carbon baseline for the current coastal management approach** which can then be repeated to quantify, track and report the GHGs associated with the [Coastwise] programme [and] to understand what **systems, processes, and tools** should be put in place so that the data can inform **effective decision-making**."*

Integrating GHG assessments and climate adaptation (2)



Coastwise team activities: NNDC's office energy use, staff commuting, business travel, etc.



Hard infrastructure: Asset construction, maintenance and repairs



Offsetting projects: Renewable energy (wind and solar) and nature-based solutions (woodland creation, salt marsh creation, peatland restoration)

Partially or fully **within** NNDC's control



Rollback: Demolishing and replacing buildings, roads and infrastructure



Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF): Emissions associated with coastal erosion

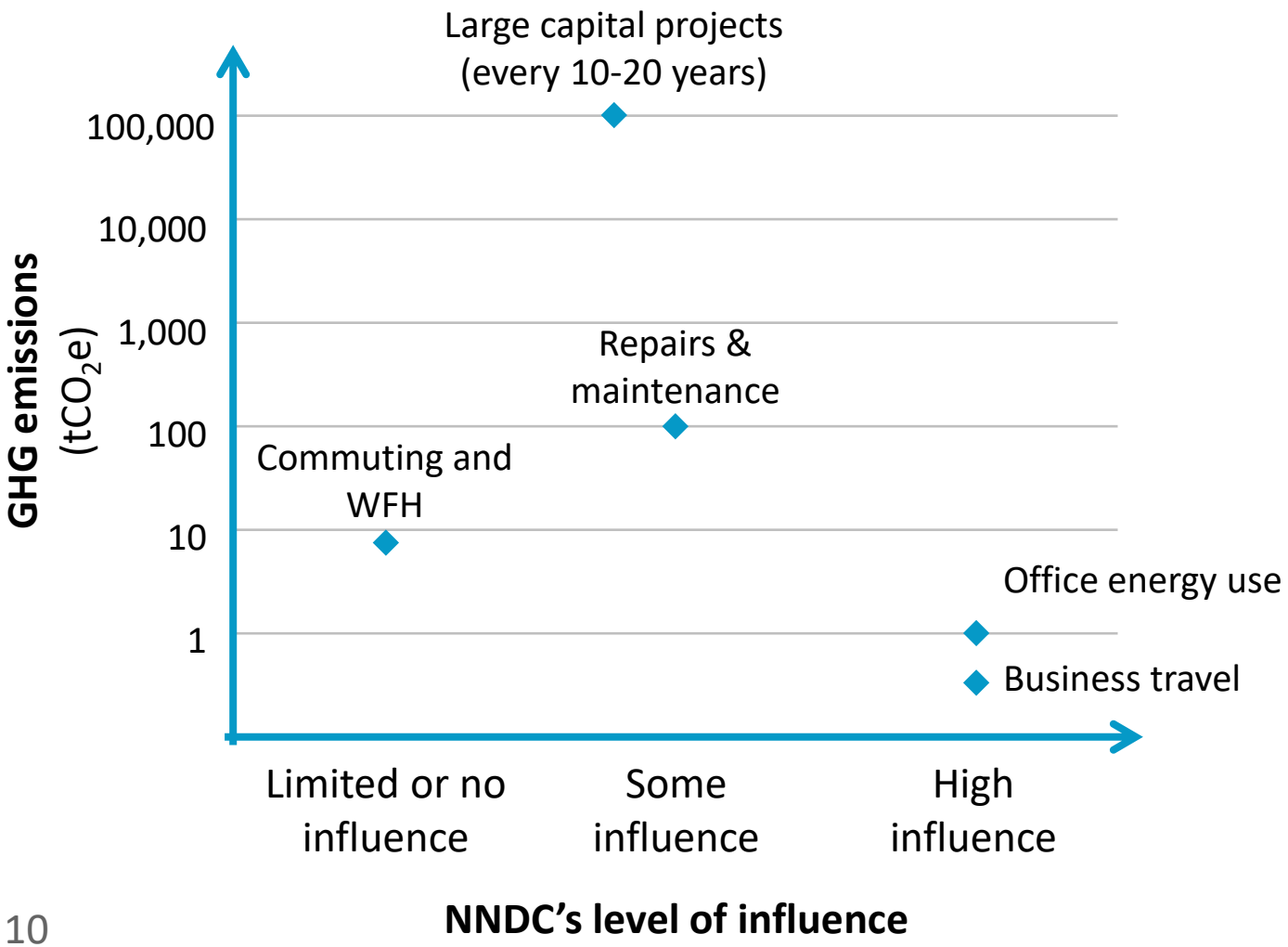
Partially or fully **outside** NNDC's control

Key challenge: How could we produce a methodology that was robust enough to inform decision-making, but also easy for NNDC to replicate?

Integrating GHG assessments and climate adaptation (3)

GHG impact vs. NNDC's level of influence

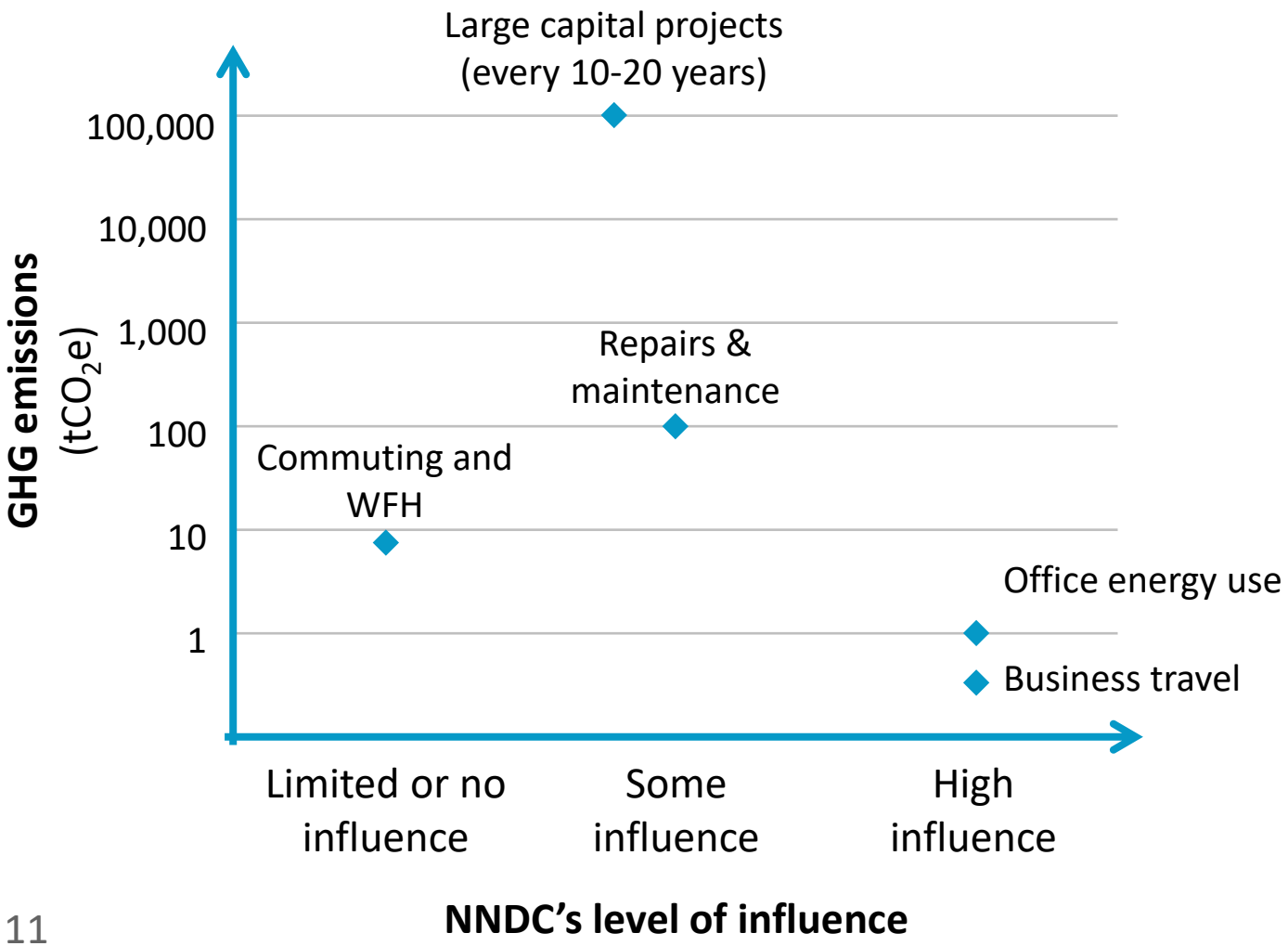
Note: In the graph below, the Y-axis uses a logarithmic scale



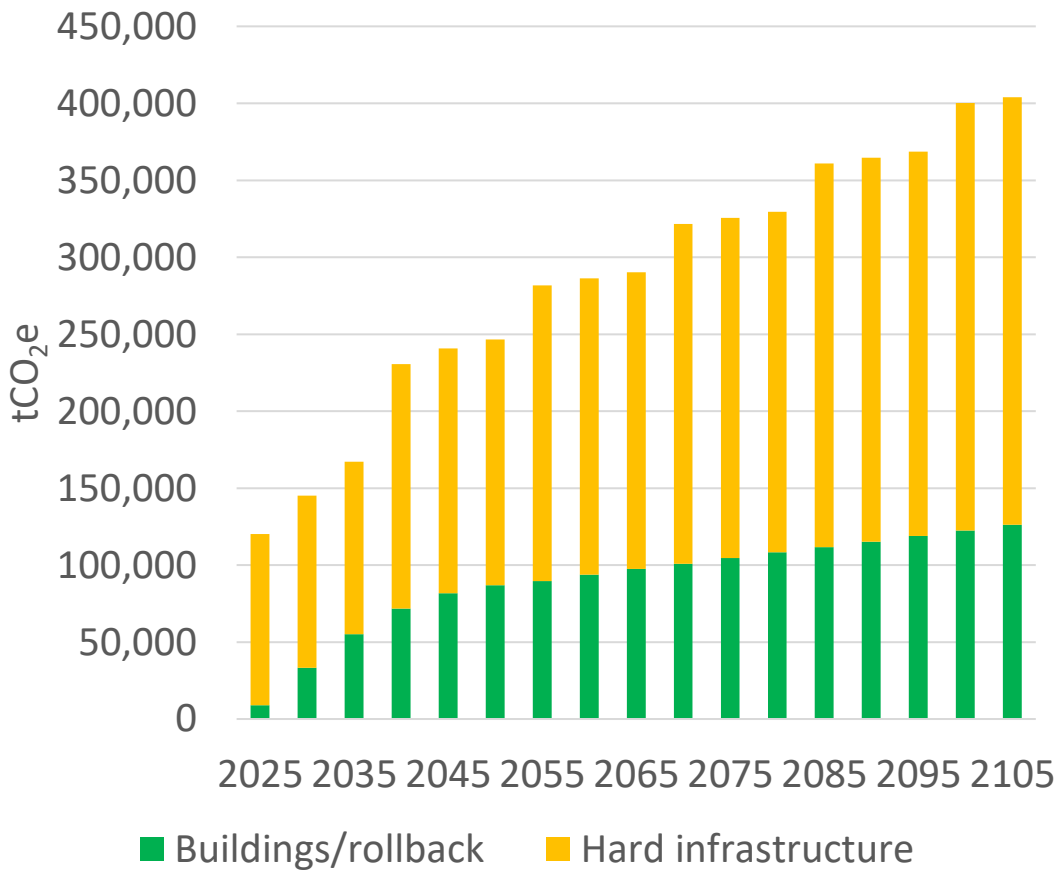
Integrating GHG assessments and climate adaptation (3)

GHG impact vs. NNDC's level of influence

Note: In the graph below, the Y-axis uses a logarithmic scale



Cumulative GHG emissions from key sources
(tCO_2e)



Using scenario analysis to understand spheres of influence (1)



Background and context:

Orkney Islands Council has a high level of ambition for achieving net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in advance of the national target date of 2045 – with 2030 having been considered at one stage. However, the council operates in a unique context, and some of its emissions are associated with activities for which there is either:

- No commercially available technological solution at present (e.g. ferries, planes); or
- Important wider social, economic, and historic considerations (e.g. peatland)

The study needed to consider options that would be technologically and practically feasible and advise on suitable targets, while retaining the same high level of ambition.

Client's requirements:

Aether was commissioned to provide: *"An **independent review** of the Authority's carbon baseline (both scope and data); and a study to inform and identify **indicative transition pathways to achieving net zero**."* This evidence will feed into OIC's future Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

Using scenario analysis to understand spheres of influence (2)



Ferries

- Operational efficiencies
- Zero emission vessels

Buildings

- Retrofit buildings
- Zero emission heating

Transport

- Operational efficiencies
- Zero emission vehicles

Waste

- Reduce waste
- Recycling and composting

Supply renewable energy and infrastructure

Nature-based solutions and sustainable land management

Changing what we perceive as “benefits” vs “co-benefits” (1)



Background and context:

The Isle of Man Government is developing a Climate Change Plan 2027-2032.
The IoM recognises the need for public and stakeholder buy-in, so there is a very strong focus on ensuring that all policies are developed collaboratively.

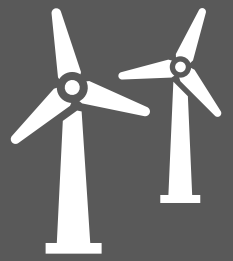
Client’s requirements:

Aether is providing technical and analytical support, advising on the approach to stakeholder engagement, and modelling the impacts of proposed policies and measures.

Changing what we perceive as “benefits” vs “co-benefits” (2)

How policy ambitions are usually framed:	How policy ambitions could be framed:
 **“Increase the use of public transport.”**	“Public transport is as **cheap, convenient and accessible** as private vehicles - if not more so.”
 **“Reduce demand for private cars, e.g. through taxation or parking charges.”**	“**Safe and enjoyable routes** make it easy for everyone to walk or cycle to shops, schools, and other amenities when they want to.”

Changing what we perceive as “benefits” vs “co-benefits” (3)

How policy ambitions are usually framed:	How policy ambitions could be framed:
 **“Phase out the use of fossil fuels in buildings.”**	“Everyone can **afford** to heat or cool their home to a **comfortable level** without polluting the atmosphere.”
 **“Increase deployment of large-scale renewable technologies.”**	“We have a **resilient energy system** that doesn’t rely on fossil fuels.”
	“Communities enjoy the direct benefits of **cheap energy**.”

Devolution & SDS – Significant opportunity

Spatial Development Strategies provide a unique opportunity to embed environmental and climate outcomes into key statutory long-term policies that will shape areas for over 30 years.

The Aether/ADEPT project will create **a proof-of-concept approach** for integrating environmental and climate policies and their wider impacts into the Spatial Development Strategies (SDS), making sure these policies are not only embedded but their impact can be tracked and measured.

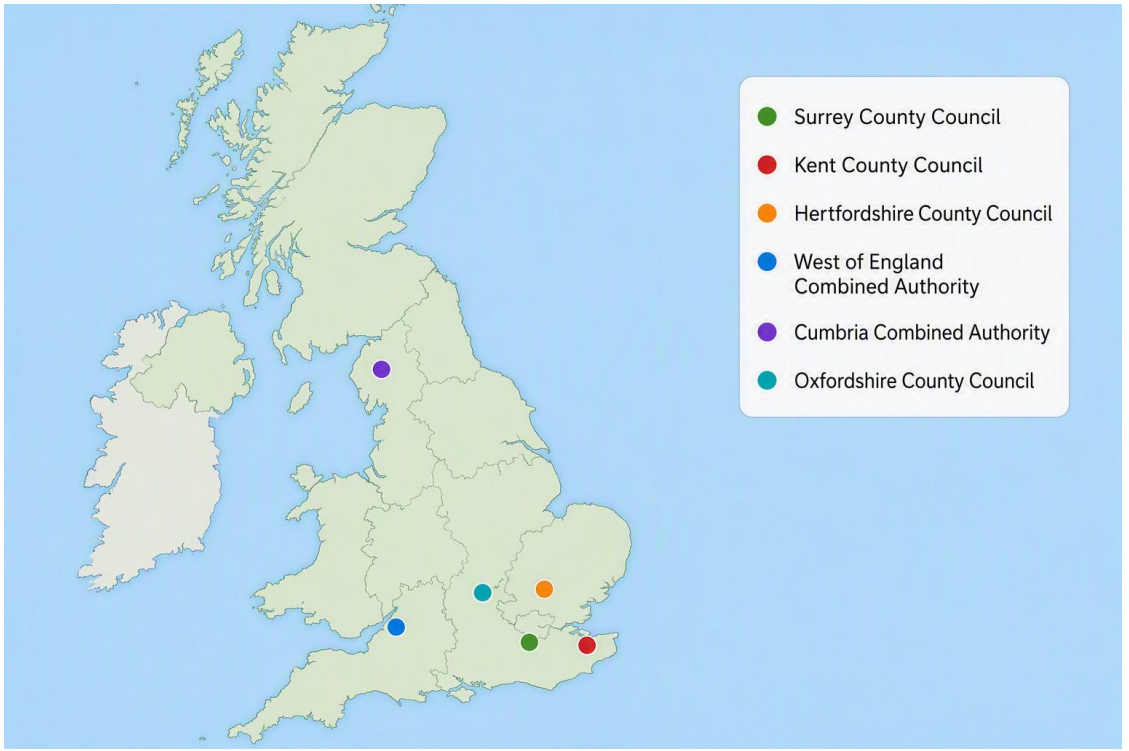
We are not proposing to deliver a single 'tool' or technical fix.

Instead, we are establishing a Community of Practice (CoP) bringing together technical and policy officers from interested councils to jointly develop a practical, evidence-based and replicable approach for embedding and tracking environmental priorities within SDSs.

This collaborative model ensures solutions are robust, feasible, and designed around the priorities of emerging SDS and local government capacity.

Local Authority Partners

- **Cumbria Combined Authority**
- **Hertfordshire County Council**
- **Kent County Council**
- **Oxfordshire County Council**
- **Surrey County Council**
- **West of England Combined Authority**



What is a Strategic Environmental Outcome for an SDS?

Strategic Environmental Outcome



A **desired long-term environmental change across the region.**

- Makes environmental priorities explicit in decisions about growth, investment, policy and place.
- Focuses on how growth can improve environmental conditions and resilience.
- When delivered well, strategic environmental outcomes create social benefits, e.g. improving quality of life, health, equality

Resource-efficient places

…support growth across the region, by using land, water, energy and materials sustainably, reducing waste and pollution, and improving environmental quality.

What makes it strategic?

Spatially strategic



Influences where and how growth happens

Outcome focused



Describe the change we want to see

Decision-shaping



Guides growth, investment and policy

Measurable



Progress can be tracked through indicators

Cross authority



Relevant across the region

Environment as Critical Infrastructure

The natural environment should be recognised and protected for its own inherent value.

Decisions about land and resources should respect ecological limits and safeguard the integrity of natural systems, not because of what they enable for people or the economy, but because the natural world matters in its own right.

For an SDS, this means treating the **environment as core strategic infrastructure** — not an environmental add-on or simply a constraint to be managed after decisions about growth have been made.

The environment is broader than the SDS and cannot be delivered through planning alone. But the SDS can provide something individual authorities cannot easily provide: a shared spatial direction across a new geography, enabling environmental systems to be planned and invested in at the scale at which they function.

Developing a Strategic Environmental Outcome

A clear pathway from vision to action



Our Vision and Mission

A healthy planet for future generations.

Our expertise helps turn data into actions
that solve environmental problems around the world.
We form strong partnerships and share our trusted knowledge,
enabling our partners to make positive changes
for our planet's climate and air quality.



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