

Develop an Influencing Strategy for your Climate Action Plan

A Political Toolkit

**UK:
100**

**Calderdale
Council**





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Executive summary

1

Shortly after the election in July 2024, the new government announced a ‘full reset’ of the relationship between local leaders and national government, promising to “take back control,” placing the different tiers of government on a more equal footing, ending a “begging bowl culture,” and starting “proper, grown-up conversations with our regional mayors”. This transfer of power out of Whitehall represents a significant opportunity for local leaders to advocate for the powers, policies, and funds they need to make real progress in delivering on their climate plans.

Central government is inviting local leaders to speak up for what they need to succeed in their areas - a golden opportunity - but the answers to the question “What needs to change for your climate plan to succeed?” are not necessarily readily available. Going through a logical and inclusive process to answer this question, and capturing the findings in a practical plan called an ‘influencing strategy,’ is what this political toolkit is all about.

Your influencing strategy will inform your conversations with national and regional government and enable you to put clear and succinct “asks” forward to them, at the right time, in a manner that they can action. Secondly, by leading stakeholders through a process to identify where the key blockers to delivery on your climate plan are, you will also deepen and strengthen these stakeholder relationships, building new alliances that add weight to your advocacy. Thirdly, in strategically considering how to deploy your

voice as a local authority, you will align internal departmental interests and begin to speak with ‘one voice’ on climate issues.

This political toolkit guides you through the process of developing an influencing strategy, using the learning from Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council’s experience as part of the UK100 Local Power in Action Programme 2023-24.

Developing an influencing strategy will help you as a local leader, take maximum advantage of the historic opportunity presented by the “reset” of the relationship with national government and further devolution, and ultimately help you deliver on the climate action plans you have committed to on behalf of your area.

Calderdale Council’s Climate and Environment team won the “Leadership in Responding to the Climate Emergency” award at the [MJ Awards 2024](#).¹ Their influencing strategy was part of their submission for the award.



About UK100

UK100 is the only climate network of locally elected leaders that focuses on the delivery of Net Zero. We bring together local authorities across the country to share knowledge, collaborate, and advocate to the UK government with their collective power. Our membership spans the UK, is cross-party and represents all tiers of local government.

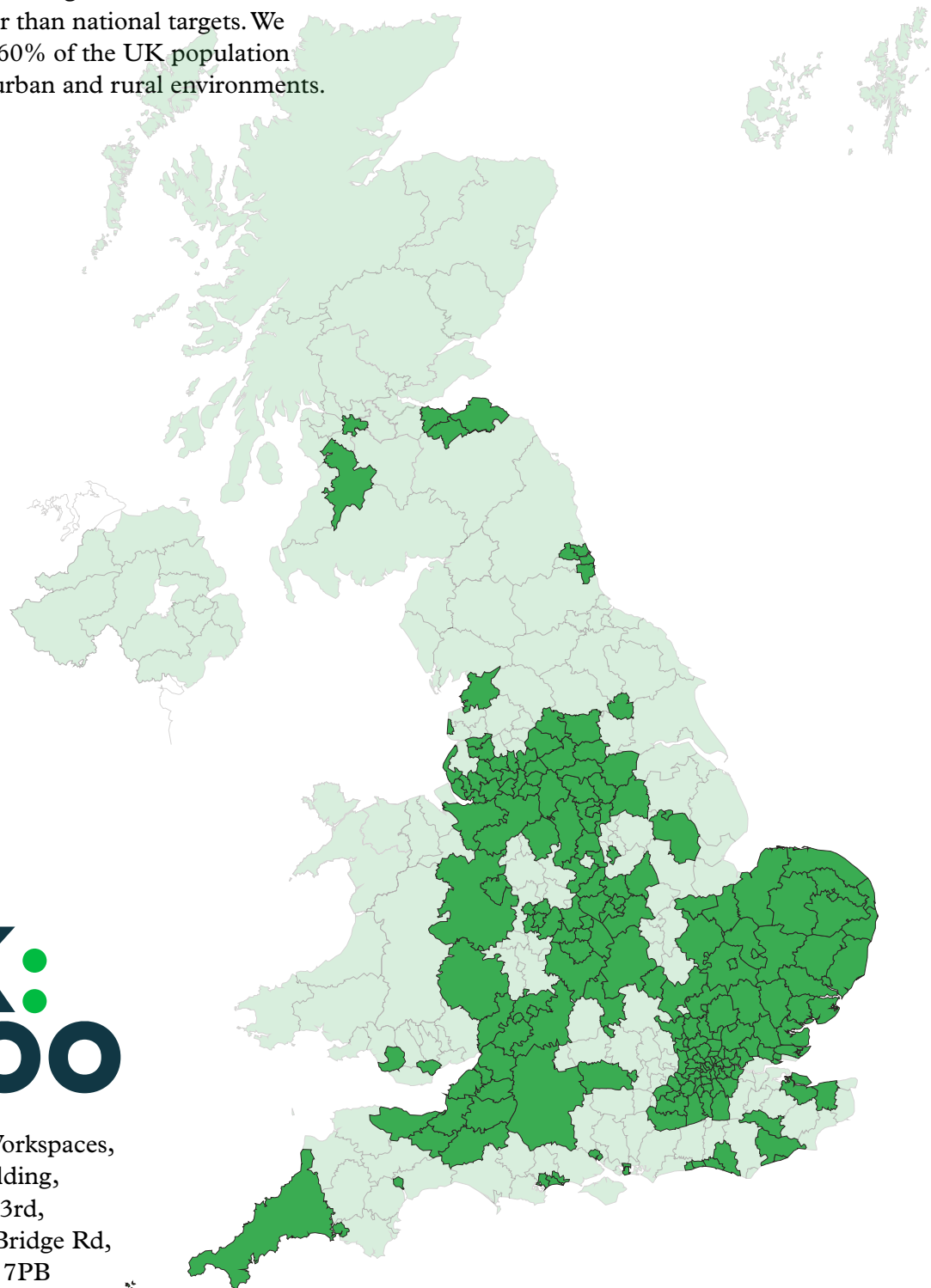
There are now 115 cross-party local leaders committed to meeting Net Zero at least five years earlier than national targets. We represent over 60% of the UK population covering both urban and rural environments.

UK100 connects local leaders to each other and to the national government, enabling them to showcase their achievements and learn from each other. We enable them to speak collectively on how to accelerate the transition to clean energy locally and nationally.

You can read more about us here: <http://www.uk100.org>



Sustainable Workspaces,
Riverside Building,
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Westminster Bridge Rd,
London, SE1 7PB



Introduction



An influencing strategy is a plan that sets out steps to address the political or organisational barriers which are acting as blockers to a local or combined authority achieving the carbon emission reduction targets outlined in their Climate Action Plan.

The benefits of an influencing strategy are:

- increased chance of success in removing policy and organisational blockers to delivering climate targets
- increased chance of success at securing more resources to deliver climate action
- internal alignment around climate-related asks of external stakeholders

The purpose of this political toolkit is to introduce the concept of an influencing strategy linked to a Climate Action Plan,

and to provide practical advice and process tips for local government leaders based on a best practice example. Advice is based on the best practice example of Calderdale Council, which developed an Influencing Strategy in 2023/24 with support from [UK100's Local Power in Action Programme](#).²

In Section 3, we look at the rationale for developing an influencing strategy and how local authorities often do not maximise their opportunities to be heard. In Section 4, using Calderdale's experience as a template, we break the process of developing an influencing strategy into five stages and explore the specific actions required across each stage of the process. Section 5 considers the business case for your influencing strategy, who should be involved in its development, how to create influencing moments, challenges you might encounter and some project management basics.

“We need an influencing strategy which can help us to articulate specific changes and achieve these to enable us to reach Net Zero”

CALDERDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
UK100 LOCAL POWER IN ACTION PROGRAMME, MAY 2023

Why develop an influencing strategy?

Developing an influencing strategy for your climate action plan will help you and officers at all levels to speak with one unified voice, making and reinforcing specific asks on the priority issues you have identified, and moving from reactive commenting to proactively help set the agenda. If you don't ask, you don't get. In the case of Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council, (CMBC) a performance review from the Local Government Association (LGA) highlighted the council's successes but also their opportunity to access further resources:

"... this success does not represent the full scope of what CMBC might aspire to secure for Calderdale. There is more potential for securing more resources... if the council can be clearer and bolder about its strategic asks and have more confidence in its own positions and ambitions for its residents, businesses and communities when making the case in West Yorkshire".

This is a common finding of LGA Peer Reviews and illustrates exactly why an outward facing influencing strategy which makes the case for funding, is important and why a business case can be built for investing in one. Despite climate action being listed as one of a small number of top corporate priorities in many local authorities, reports from senior officers suggest that,

in practice, climate can often feel like less of a priority than other areas, which have a more established historical footing (for example, economic growth). Developing an Influencing Strategy necessitates engaging with the senior leadership of the authority and with other internal departments, particularly with the planning, transport, estate, housing and business support teams. Where these departments are experiencing policy barriers or policy uncertainty that is stopping them delivering on actions in a climate action plan, an influencing strategy has a key place. It will help identify steps that can be taken and reset a relationship from a demand to an offer of support. The result can be renewed buy-in to climate workstreams and priorities from different teams and people.

The diagram on the following page shows 'the influencing onion' which illustrates the different layers of stakeholders that you, as a local leader, can influence, and positions them in order of directness. The influencing strategy of this toolkit pertains to layer F of the influencing onion; focussing on communicating ideas for solutions to external stakeholders, particularly to those in decision-making positions in regional and national government.

"The influencing strategy process is worth its weight in gold. We are considering rolling it out as a model for use in other departments"

DEBORAH HARKINS, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND CLIMATE ACTION,
CALDERDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

In 2023, Calderdale's stakeholder-led Climate Action Partnership committed to producing an influencing strategy. This commitment recognised that some actions within the Calderdale Climate Action Plan would be impossible to achieve without changes in local, regional, and national policy, alongside actions and contributions from bodies that operate at these levels.

Calderdale applied to UK100's Local Power in Action Programme 2023 and was successful in getting support from UK100 in the form of a Net Zero Pathfinder to work alongside them for nine months to develop the influencing strategy. The final adopted strategy can be found in: [Influencing Change: a strategy for climate advocacy in Calderdale³](#)



F. Involving, Engaging & Communicating: translating climate targets for local relevance; raising awareness, involving people & ideas for local solutions

E. Partnerships: leading, bringing people & organisations together, joining others' partnerships

D. Showcasing: innovating, piloting, demonstrating and sharing good practice, scaling and replicating

C. Place Shaping: using powers to control development and transport

B. Procurement and commissioning & commercialisation

A: Direct control: buildings, operations, travel

Diagram 1: the 'Stakeholder Influencing Onion' for local leaders. The influencing strategy of this toolkit sits within the outermost ring of the onion as it is about influencing external stakeholders through advocacy

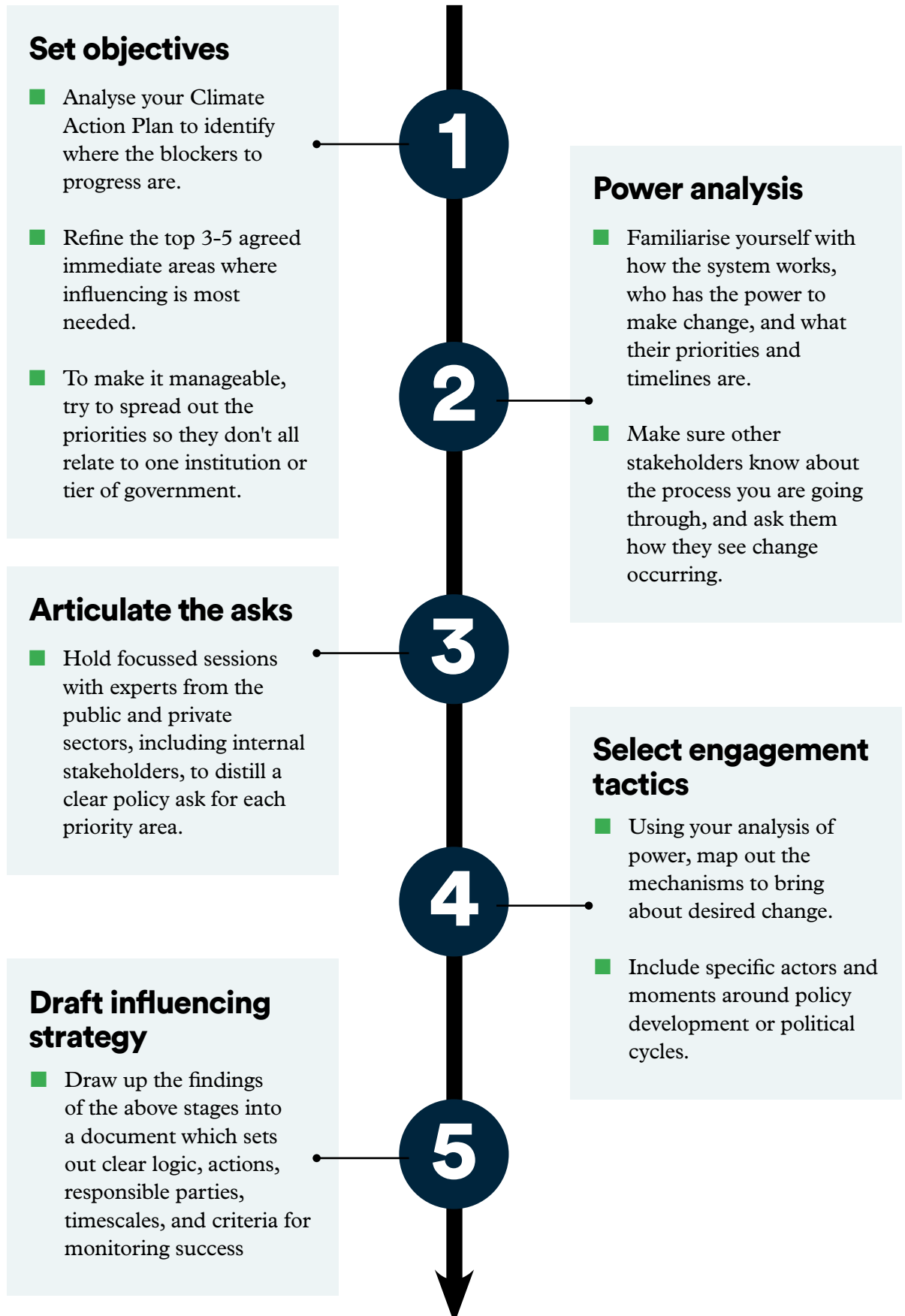


**Halifax
Town Hall**



Five-step process for an influencing strategy

We have broken down the approach into a series of five steps and recommend these as best practices in developing an influencing strategy.



Step 1: Setting objectives

Using your Climate Action Plan, the first step is to identify where national or regional policy changes are required for your climate action to be delivered in full. In a typical climate action plan, key policy areas that require change have probably already been indicated in the text. Here are a few examples from Calderdale Council's Climate Action Plan:



Renewable Energy: Influencing national government to ensure communities can benefit from

local energy production



Transport: 70% of the decisions on transport policy are nationally controlled. Ensuring that buses

and rail function properly will require action from any regional transport authorities and national government



Building Standards: This is difficult to raise locally so local authorities need to work regionally and nationally to make it happen.



Resources: (financial, jobs, advice) are needed to deliver any climate action plan so finding funding and investment is crucial.

Other indirect political barriers may be less likely to be referenced in a Climate Action Plan but can create equally significant obstacles to achieving local carbon emission reduction targets. Examples of these for Calderdale were:

- The lack of a National Framework for Net Zero: A statutory duty for local authorities to take climate action, with clear responsibilities and sufficient resourcing.
- The lack of environmental justice: Ensuring climate action narrows rather than widens, the divide and disadvantages experienced by marginalised communities
- The lack of financial tools to support homeowners and landlords: Supporting investments in insulation and decarbonisation measures by influencing

the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

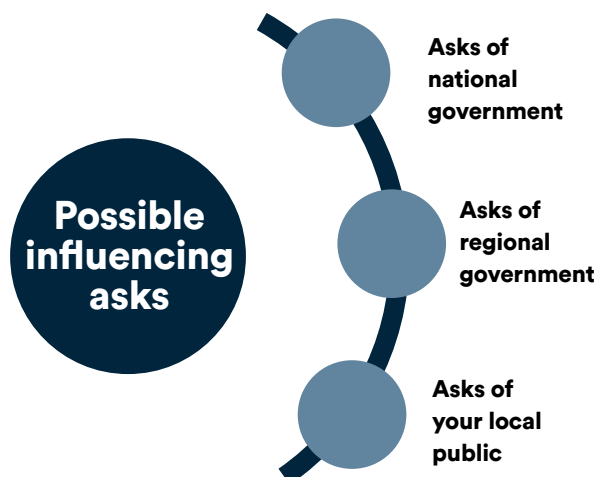
- The lack of network infrastructure for Heat Pumps, Solar, EVs: Ofgem & DESNZ rulings for a streamlined, standardised response from Distribution Network Operators.

Once you have identified all the policy and resourcing barriers, a prioritisation process (Calderdale's criteria in appendix 1) is needed to reflect on what poses the greatest threat to your climate targets if not delivered. A secondary consideration is which interventions offer the most impact to wider social and corporate objectives. These can help you frame the narrative. Trying to use any more than five priorities risks an unfocused and diffused strategy.

Engaging stakeholders at this first stage of the process, for example, by holding a workshop with your Climate Partnership or the relevant committee, helps secure their buy-in to the overall development of the influencing strategy.

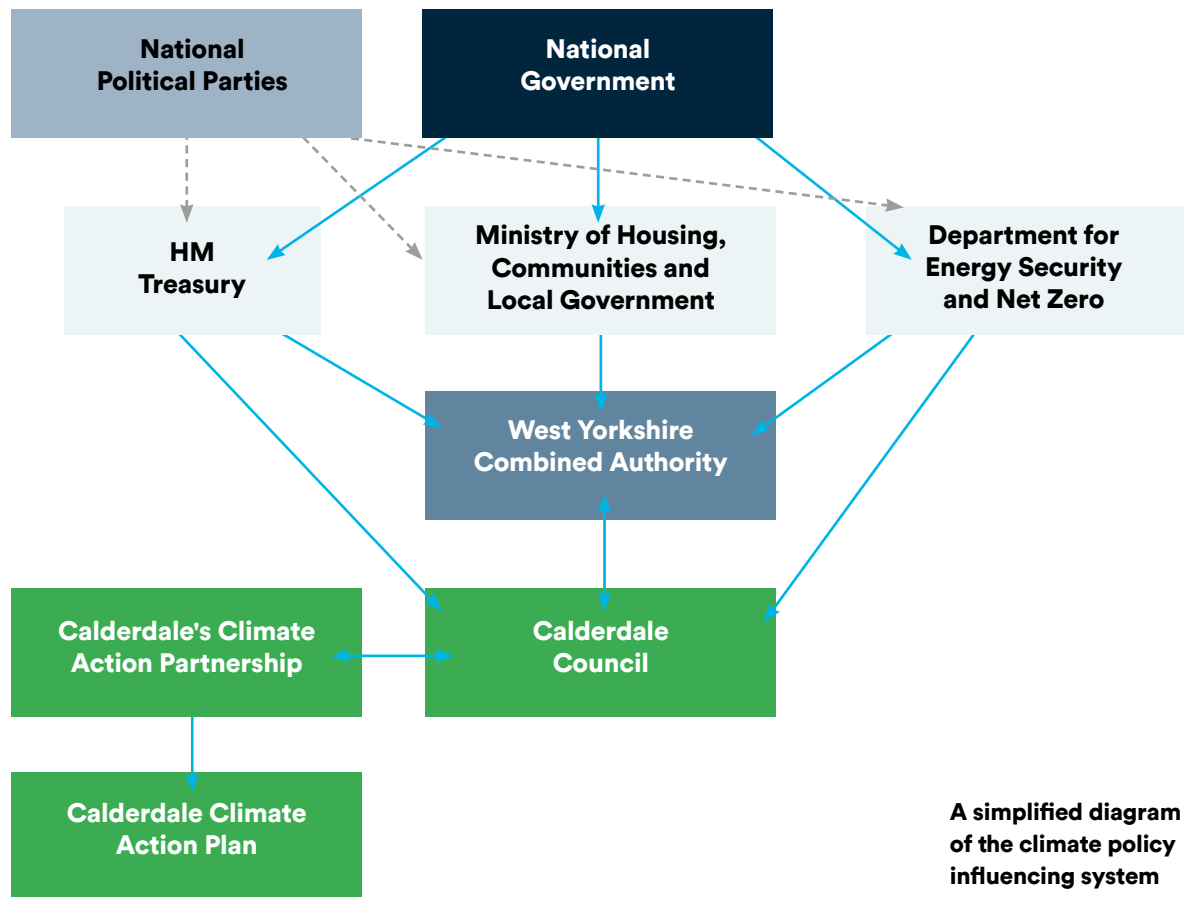
To make the process manageable, you may want to specify one ask for national policymakers, one for regional policymakers and one for more general change. You have more than three asks in total, but it is important not to present more than two asks to any one stakeholder, as this risks diluting the impact of each individual ask.

Divide your asks up to make it manageable





Step 2: Analyse power flows



Map out the actors at different tiers of government, and the key policy documents along with their cycle dates. Who are likely to be your allies, and where do your senior leaders already have well-established relationships? What motivates some of the key actors? Which conferences or events have they agreed to speak at?

In meetings with senior politicians or decision-makers, listen carefully to which other organisations, reports or workstreams they refer to: this reveals who currently gets their attention.

The diagram above shows a simplified version of the climate policy influencing system. For the most part, political parties play three background roles that permeate the influencing system: the political make-up of the elected bodies (councils, combined authorities, and national government), the quality of political opposition, and the thought leadership provided by politically aligned think-tanks. It is only in election periods that national political parties come to the forefront, when their manifestos directly shape each part of the system.

Relationships and networks are key to influencing. Making an ask or outlining an alternative path, providing data and engaging in conversations at the right point in a process can be crucial. Creating your own spaces and opportunities to influence is important as is making continuous use of the day-to-day channels that government bodies and organisations, use as these are key places for influencing and being heard. These include agenda setting, consultations, future plans, and budgeting processes.

Recognise where your organisation is already around the table at key decision-making meetings. Who is representing your organisation and what is the briefing process? Who chairs the meetings, and how far ahead is the agenda set?

Finally, to develop strong influencing asks, buy-in from other parties is essential. Public opinion is key to shaping political ambition. Neighbouring local authorities that also have Net Zero targets are natural allies. How can you better connect to deliver action together?



Opportunities for influencing

Below is a list of some of the opportunities for influencing that Calderdale identified in early 2024.

- ➔ Mayoral election: Candidates' manifesto development
 - » Politically active partnership members to influence manifestos
- ➔ General Election: Which party is expected to win
 - » Building a relationship with relevant candidates or local MP
 - » Making the case for further devolution, including funding and power for local climate action
- ➔ Local elections and manifesto development
- ➔ Climate and Environment Committee
- ➔ Climate and Environment Plan refresh
 - » Next plan more inclusively engaged on and produced?
 - » An Active Travel Network?
 - » Funding demonstrators for retrofit?
 - » Project funding for Climate Action Plan delivery?
 - » Clearer delineation of roles between combined authority and borough?
 - » Resourcing of Climate Action Partnership itself?
 - » Strategic transport funding announcements from cancellation of HS2
- ➔ Mayor of West Yorkshire's consultation on taking buses into public control

“Leaders across Calderdale play leadership roles at national and regional levels and this represents an asset and position of influence that CMBC would do well to recognise”

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE OF CALDERDALE





Step 3: Articulate the asks

Articulating a specific ask for each of the three areas of change you would like to see is the most challenging part of developing the Influencing Strategy. It requires holding a series of meetings with internal and external experts to understand precisely how the desired change can be achieved. This research phase is also critical for amassing evidence and key points to support your asks, as well as raising awareness about your influencing strategy.

Experts that you may consult in this stage include:

- ➔ County or combined authority representatives
- ➔ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- ➔ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
- ➔ Organisations like UK100, APSE or the Local Government Association
- ➔ Local Net Zero Hub
- ➔ Neighbouring authorities
- ➔ Housing associations
- ➔ Transport authority
- ➔ Climate commission, if there's one in your area - or consider setting one up
- ➔ Community climate hub, or umbrella environmental organisation
- ➔ Businesses
- ➔ Green finance bodies
- ➔ Local academic institutions

To make it manageable, remember that you're only looking for one ask for each of your priority areas, ensuring a spread across the different levels these asks target. We suggest:

- **An ask of regional and neighbouring local governments**, which need to be made by the council administration and senior managers.
- **An ask of national government**, which need to be made collaboratively with other regional and local leaders to maximise impact.
- **An area where broader public understanding is essential**, and communications along with strong local leadership is needed to cement a chosen direction

Once your research has been distilled into a small number of 'asks' options for each priority area, we recommend holding another stakeholder workshop to discuss the draft influencing asks.



In Calderdale, the UK100 Pathfinder and council officers led discussions at the theme group meetings of the Climate Action Partnership related to the identified priorities (the 'Warm and Resilient Buildings (WRB)' theme group and the 'Transport' theme group).

Within the WRB group which included officers from the planning department, estates, and the CEO of the largest local housing provider, the practical difficulties facing the planners in approving external insulation for the solid stone terraces that make up the majority of the borough's housing stock was pinpointed by participants. Planners were clear that ultimately, what was needed was for national government to provide a clear steer on how to balance historic streetscapes and home insulation within the planning system.

Stone buildings at Hebden Bridge



Step 4: Channels and tactics

Now that you have set your objectives, mapped power flows, and articulated your asks, it is time to consider how best to present these asks:

- ➔ Who is the ask directed towards?
- ➔ Who should make the ask?
- ➔ By what route should the ask be made?
- ➔ When should it be made?
- ➔ What supporting information or resources are needed?
- ➔ What follow-up might be needed?
- ➔ What is a good outcome?
- ➔ How does the 'ask' relate back to your Climate Action Plan?

This is where your early engagement with a broad stakeholder group pays off, as they will likely feel enthusiastic about advocating for some of the asks on your behalf - asks are stronger when they do not come from 'the usual suspects.'

Examples of tactics include:

- A one-page document outlining your position on an issue and the proposed actions to address it.
- Open letters to ministers or MPs.
- Lobbying and direct advocacy, such as building relations with local MPs, organising and attending meetings, and writing advocacy letters or

other direct communication – either formal or informal – with decision-makers and influential figures in government, business, and other institutions.

- Convening conferences and events.
- Supporting community engagement on issues, for example, through shared learning events.
- Supporting climate stakeholders to become change-makers and influencers themselves.
- Communications and media, including developing messaging and narratives, and engaging with and using local and national media, social media and other communication channels.
- Building alliances and networks by liaising with neighbouring authorities to identify those that support your asks and presenting these as common goals.





In Calderdale, the following ask, channels, and tactics were agreed upon regarding clear planning advice for retrofit:

Ask

We ask the next national government to publish updated planning guidance on how to align the retrofit of heritage areas (such as solid stone wall terraces) with the preservation of our historic environment.

Aim

By 2027/8, updated planning advice is in place which enables whole house retrofit whilst safeguarding the most important aspects of historic street scene.

Actions

1. Ask Calderdale Council to endorse this ask via the Cabinet paper process (Calderdale officers' to support).
2. Organise a retrofit event in Calderdale, bringing together stakeholders across the retrofit sector in 2024.
3. Invite the Minister and Shadow Minister for Housing and Planning
4. Invite the Minister and Shadow Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero
5. Engage with other councils that have a high proportion of stone terrace housing with a view to forming an alliance.
6. Draft a two-page political briefing on this topic, including clear links between climate, the local economy, health and social justice.
7. Discuss with neighbouring local authorities and WYCA and ask them to support our ask.

Relation to Calderdale's Climate Action Plan

Action WRB5: "Start piloting visible and innovative ways of decarbonising homes so we can build the skills needed locally and people can see what this looks like."

The Plan states that Calderdale must retrofit 69,000 properties to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) level C by 2038 if it is to reach Net Zero. On page 26, the Plan highlights that Calderdale's beautiful stone buildings, over 50% of Calderdale's homes, will be a challenge to decarbonise. This Influencing Action is a long-term enabling measure, laying the groundwork for domestic retrofit at scale while minimising community concern. It recognises that national government has a role in building social consent through the planning process.

To Note: Guidance from national government should support, rather than supersede, the devolved responsibility to the respective planning authority, to make decisions and issue guidance with reference to local plans and policies.

Make the most of existing channels your team are already connected to. With the exception of a specific influencing event, your authority is likely to be engaged in many of the above activities already. Consider which conferences your senior leaders are speaking at, whether your climate officers are attending regional meetings, and if your

political lead participates in their political party's Local Government Association conference. Additionally, take advantage of your membership with UK100—reach out to us (membership@uk100.org) to inquire about how we can help promote your asks to national decision-makers.

Step 5: Draft strategy

Now capture the results of Steps 1 to 4 in a document and ensure your stakeholders are able to comment on it at the draft stage.

Since your goal is likely to influence regionally and nationally, it is essential that the senior leadership team of the council is fully aware of the content of the strategy and supportive of it. Hopefully, they will have pledged their active support.

The strategy should go through your council's standard strategy approval process (normally cabinet approval and council adoption). Note that the council meeting at which the strategy is considered for approval

offers an important influencing opportunity in itself; for example, the lead member could commend the strategy and talk through the influencing asks in a short speech, in effect, briefing all councillor colleagues with the key lines.

An annual review should be built into the process, with a focus on how influencing capacity has increased as well as monitoring against milestones. More frequent mini-reviews would also be helpful, reflecting that circumstances can change rapidly and the original influencing strategy could quickly become outdated.



The Calder Hebble
Navigation canal at
Brighouse, Calderdale



5

Factors to consider in developing your influencing strategy

In this section we will look at the business case for your influencing strategy, identify who should be involved in its development, discuss how to create influencing moments, address potential challenges you might come across and cover some project management basics.

5.1 The business case for an influencing strategy for your climate action plan

Developing an Influencing Strategy may divert time and resources away from climate project delivery in the short-term; however, the long-term benefits should outweigh this initial investment.

In effect, without employing any new staff, you are creating a well-trained and on-message internal public affairs team. This communication work is diffused throughout your departmental teams and leadership, who will consistently advocate for your key priorities at every occasion. Once the influencing strategy process is complete, the resources required to deliver it will

be relatively low, focusing mainly on using existing channels.

Though UK100 and other organisations have successfully advocated for an end to piecemeal, short-term funding pots, winning resource allocations for climate projects is still likely to remain a competitive sport for some time to come. Making clearly quantified asks for specific allocations two or three years into the future can help guide regional or national budget holders when they are planning future disbursements.

For example, one of the key asks that Calderdale Council developed in their influencing plan was a request for £3.5m to roll out the next phase of their retrofit programme from 2026 to 2028. Calderdale worked closely with WYCA to articulate how the benefits of this work would deliver against the combined authority's wider objectives and form part of their workplan, thereby maximising the chances that the proposal will be incorporated into future plans for the region.

5.2 Who needs to be involved in developing an influencing strategy?

The influencing strategy should have the support of the senior leadership of the Council, including the Leader/Mayor, Cabinet, Chief Executive and senior officers. It is beneficial to build a Core Team to develop and implement the strategy.

Tip

SUGGESTED CORE TEAM

- ➔ Cabinet Member for Climate
- ➔ Senior Responsible Officer for Climate
- ➔ Climate officer/team
- ➔ An external consultant (if resources allow)



Some local authorities have set up external stakeholder groups to guide the development and implementation of climate action plans. If you are working with a climate action partnership or a similar entity, their involvement adds significant value to the process of developing your influencing strategy, enabling it to be tangibly linked to and grounded in your wider community.

5.3 The importance of creating influencing ‘moments’

Relationships and networks are key to influencing. Making an ask or setting out an alternative path, providing data, and having a conversation at the right point in a process can be crucial.

Creating your own spaces and opportunities to influence will be important, as well as making continuous use of the day-to-day channels that government bodies and organisations use; these are key places for influencing and being heard.

These include agenda setting, consultations, future plans, and budgeting processes.

Planning an event of your own and inviting key decision-makers is resource-intensive, but is an excellent way to get your asks noticed. It also ensures alignment among internal stakeholders and creates a spotlight on climate.

Calderdale’s Local solutions for Net Zero conference overview

UK100 is supporting Calderdale Council at their influencing event in November 2024. The conference will offer valuable lessons from Calderdale Council on how to unlock barriers to local Net Zero, applicable both regionally and nationally.

Convening stakeholders, partners, and decision-makers from across West Yorkshire and beyond with the aim to collaboratively explore solutions to Net Zero challenges, including Local Area Energy Planning and domestic retrofit.

Calderdale Council’s influencing asks will be presented, providing an opportunity for attendees to discuss what additional support and powers are necessary at the regional and national levels to overcome barriers to local Net Zero. For Calderdale, this event represents a significant first step in advancing its influencing asks.





5.4 Challenges to developing an influencing strategy

Challenge 1: translating influencing into a local government strategy

Influencing is a dynamic and responsive process based on soft power. It is not easily translated into the traditional policy strategy report format of local government. This presents a challenge for both, a climate team to develop an influencing strategy, and for the strategy to go through the various stages of sign-off and adoption. Monitoring the success of the strategy is also difficult.

What actually makes a difference in influencing policy might be as seemingly insignificant as a cup of coffee with a decision-maker at a key moment in the policy cycle. What makes success more likely, however, is a strategic approach; for example, where leaders, cabinet members and officers at all levels communicate the same clear message to identified stakeholders using every existing opportunity and creating new platforms to be used as influencing opportunities.

The table below shows a comparison of normal policy delivery and influencing.

Challenge 2: navigating the political

A joined-up influencing strategy should include both sides of the political/officer divide. Party politics clearly have a role in determining the national and regional policy parameters, which in turn affect local authorities' ability to deliver climate action. However, local authority officers have a duty to be non-political.

There are ways to bridge this divide; for example, officers can meet with officials in regional and national government as well as their professional networks. Although sensitivity is particularly important in the pre-election period, officers should not be afraid of or step away from supporting advocacy with an influencing strategy.

Tip

Make sure to be as cross-party as possible, or at least reflective of your authority's political makeup. In the pre-election period, take regular advice from your electoral team on what is appropriate, and divide tasks between elected representatives and officers carefully.



5.5 Project management basics

Learning from Calderdale suggests that the length of time required to develop an Influencing Strategy and begin its implementation is around nine months. For an Influencing Strategy involving multiple points of engagement with a stakeholder group, such as a climate action partnership, we suggest an estimate of 1.5 to 2 days (0.33 FTE) a week of project officer time with a further 0.5 days (0.1 FTE) of manager time.

Recruiting an external consultant to work closely with the politicians, officer team, and external stakeholders can bring new perspectives, such as a nationwide viewpoint, lend focus to the project, and help keep the

project timelines on track. Where budget allows, we would recommend this, and include a sample brief in Appendix 2.

For a stakeholder-led process, we recommend budgeting for 20-25 days of a consultant's time. This could be reduced to 7-10 days and focused on facilitation if budgets are tight, but be aware that you may lose valuable external perspective.

If you are going to apply for funding to support a consultant's time, you might allocate a budget of around £8,000. The total costs of a nine-month project, excluding staff time, but including facilitation and an Influencing event might be around £10,000. Your staff time would then count as match-funding.



Suggested timeline:

This is based on the nine-month project in Calderdale, which was a partnership between the Council and UK100's Local Power in Action Programme.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Month 1 | Project inception, objective setting begins, power analysis |
| Month 2 | Collaborative workshop with stakeholders to set objectives |
| Month 3 | Partnership approves/amends Influencing Priorities |
| Month 4 | Work to build influencing capacity, articulate specific asks, identify influencing opportunities and influencing channels |
| Month 5 | |
| Month 6 | Stakeholder group refine a draft Influencing Strategy |
| Month 7 | Climate Partnership approve/amend Influencing Strategy |
| Month 8 | Work to deliver Influencing Strategy. For example, a regional stakeholder summit on perhaps Transport or Energy |
| Month 9 | Implementation of influencing strategy begins. Early milestones might include, for example, a national stakeholder roundtable or a regional conference |



Summary

“To be successful, influencing work must be clear on who we need to influence, what the key opportunities and timeframes are and how we monitor success. It should also consider how we can take action as a whole partnership/place and with local and regional allies to maximise visibility and impact”

CALDERDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
UK100 LOCAL POWER IN ACTION PROGRAMME, MAY 2023

Local authorities can struggle to articulate the policy and legislative changes necessary to achieve their climate goals.

In the complex ecosystem of multi-tier government, the imperative to maintain good working relationships in order to secure future resources can work against an authority's willingness to articulate and assert the changes it would like to see.

An Influencing Strategy tackles the policy or organisational blockers which stand in the way of your authority meeting its Net Zero goals as set out in its Climate Action Plan.

The process of developing an Influencing Strategy clarifies your authority's key asks and builds support for them internally and with allies.

Although an Influencing Strategy is relatively resource-intensive to develop, the delivery of the actions within the Influencing Strategy can largely be achieved within business as usual.

The key difference is that the organisation is speaking with one voice and existing influencing opportunities are being used strategically.

Notes

- 1 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1y6zEvKjNQDGybC-b6fzIgbICDojiO6D7/view?usp=sharing>
- 2 <https://www.uk100.org/projects/local-power-action#:~:text=Local%20Power%20in%20Action%20is,events%20to%20share%20best%20practices>
- 3 <https://localpartnerships.gov.uk/2024/06/26/themj-awards-2024/>

Appendix 1: Prioritisation criteria



Impact: The purpose of an Influencing Strategy is to help the local authority deliver on this and future Climate Action Plans. The priorities chosen must unlock the most important barriers currently blocking actions in the Plan.

Hooks: To maximise the Influence you have, priorities should be selected where your local authority has a particular slant or relevance, so that people will listen to what you say. It needs to make sense that it is you who are saying this.

Aligning but adding: You will want to persuade your leaders and other bodies, including boroughs and even regions, to align with you in your influencing work. Therefore, it's essential to ensure that your priorities align with those of your potential allies. On the other hand, you should avoid selecting priorities that are already the focus of extensive influencing efforts elsewhere, as this may limit the added value you can provide. You want your Influencing to count.

Strategic: You should be strategic in selecting priorities where you can spot genuine moments coming up to wield your influence. For example, consider timing

your efforts around the writing of political manifestos, budget-setting processes, and revisions of major plans. Choosing the right moment in the electoral or policy-making calendar makes all the difference.

Fit: The greater the overlap between your priorities and your local authority's corporate priorities, as well as the expertise and workstreams of climate emergency officers, the better.

Ambition: Climate targets are not on track to be met - globally, nationally, regionally or locally. There is a lot that us wrong and a lot which needs to be fixed. Small changes will not deliver the quantum of change we need to see. Tackling climate change faces similar barriers in most areas of the UK, but few authorities are explicitly engaging in strategic influencing work - yours must speak for many others. You need to aim high.

Passion: To be great at Influencing, you need to be passionate about your subject. Ultimately, the questions are: 'What are we, collectively, most passionate about seeing changed?' and 'What three things do we want to go out and shout about most?'



Appendix 2: Sample brief

Core Deliverables

The overall objective of the project is to have an influencing strategy in place by <DATE> and to have started working on the key priorities from this strategy. The strategy is expected to have different targets and tactics depending on the priority discussed and current barriers but is likely to include:

- Asks of regional and neighbouring local government which need to be made by the Council administration and senior managers
- Asks of national government which need to be made with other regional and local leaders to have impact
- Areas where more widespread public understanding is key, and communications work with strong local leadership is needed to cement a chosen direction

Desired Outcomes

- To very clearly articulate 3-5 top influencing priorities
- To understand what mechanisms to use to influence these
- To explore politically contentious issues and resolve barriers
- To gather widespread support for key priorities to amplify impact and speed the pace of change



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loo