

To: Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group

Date: 22 June 2021

From: Hazel Sargent, Low Carbon & Sustainability Specialist

SUBJECT: BRIEFING NOTE ON UK100 MEMBERSHIP

SUMMARY: This report provides information on UK100, a network of local authorities who have pledged to take action on climate change.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following a request from Councillor Whybrow to Councillor Monk, that the Council joins the UK100 network to demonstrate its commitment to reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2030, officers have made further enquiries, as was requested by the Leader.

2 UK100 NETWORK

- 2.1. UK100 has been in existence since 2016 and is described on its website¹ as:

“the only network for UK locally elected leaders who have pledged to play their part in the global effort to avoid the worst impacts of climate change by switching to 100% clean energy by 2050.”

- 2.2. At the time of writing there are 57 members of the network², including a wide range of authorities from across the political spectrum, district and county councils, London boroughs and city regions. There are also a number of sub-groups of authorities within the network (for example the Resilient Recovery Taskforce). For local authorities, it was initially more city-focussed but now does have a countryside network for rural local authorities. There are no costs for local authorities to join UK100.

- 2.3. Below are, according to UK100, the benefits of being part of the network:

“A network of local leaders focused on place committed to 100% clean energy that will:

¹ See: <https://www.uk100.org/>

² See: <https://www.uk100.org/membership>

- *Devise plans to achieve 100% clean energy at city/local level by 2050 that are ambitious, cost effective and take the public and business with them.*
- *Support decision-makers in UK towns and cities by connecting them to business allies, bringing private and public sector together*
- *Ensure initiatives and solutions are network-led*
- *Enable leaders to collaborate across a peer-to-peer network, learning from each other*
- *Deliver climate action by promoting co-benefits of economic growth and health and well-being*
- *Convene local leaders to influence national policy*
- *Make material contribution to emissions reductions”*

2.4. According to the website, UK100 explains the following with regard to the Net Zero target date:

- Net Zero target date: council operations/estate by 2030, whole area by 2045 at the latest.
- Countryside counties can have a Net Zero target date of 2050 for their area-wide emissions, with the aim of moving towards an earlier Net Zero target date as soon as possible.

2.5. The focus of the UK100 membership pledge is mitigation (the full text of the membership pledge is set out in **Appendix 1** to this report). The ecological emergency, biodiversity and adaptation are important, related issues but not specific targets of this pledge. The pledge is designed to demonstrate the ambition and ability of democratically-elected local leaders to deliver on net zero emissions. It is also intended to create the conditions for stronger climate action at national level to help local authorities reach the net zero target faster.

2.6. Those councils which are members see the UK100 as giving them a voice and the opportunity to engage with government to keep up momentum. The intention of the network is ‘to take the politics out of climate change’ due to the need for action.

2.7. The Low Carbon and Sustainability Specialist requested more information from UK100 about the level of commitment and advocacy that would be expected of member authorities. UK100’s response was as follows:

“Advocacy is one part of what members do as UK100, and currently this is focused on more and better powers, funding and collaboration from national government to local government to enable delivery on Net Zero. Most of our research is currently focused on this (our [Power Shift report](#) as mentioned in the webinar), but we are also currently looking what can be done to fill that gap, what we’re calling the ‘Net Zero Local Delivery Framework’. We’re currently in

discussion with various gov departments (BEIS, MHCLG, Cabinet Office, Defra), as are our members, in order to help shape policy to local government to act on their climate targets which are often much sooner than 2050.

We also regularly send letters to various Ministers, the PM, Chancellor, etc, when relevant to ask for more to be done to enable local government to act. We will also be presenting a declaration at our Summit in July that lays out in detail what we need (shaped by our members). You can see a similar example with what we did via our [Resilient Recovery Taskforce](#) last year.

UK100 is definitely more about the collective advocacy and knowledge sharing, and convening at a political level, rather than at a technical level like ICLEI or other similar climate networks.”

- 2.8. The Power Shift report examines the powers local authorities have and could be given to deliver on climate actions. It draws on previous expert reports, including those produced for government, combined with a series of interviews with local authorities and other stakeholder organisations. Whilst recognising the lead the UK has taken, the report says that local authorities need more help from government.

3 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1. The UK100 network’s ambitions do not appear to go beyond what the Council has already set itself as a result of the Climate Emergency declaration. It does, as stated above, advocate on behalf of local government with national government in various arenas. The network produces publications and organises events on a range of topics.

Recommendation

- 3.2. The request to join the network must come from the Leader of the council.

The Working Group is therefore asked to discuss the contents of this report and provide a recommendation to the Leader on whether to join the UK100 network.

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APPENDIX ONE

UK100 MEMBERSHIP PLEDGE

The people who live in the cities, towns and villages we serve deserve warm homes, secure and affordable energy, clean air and water, and local and seasonal food. They deserve access to thriving nature and healthy landscapes, and to live in a place they can be proud of.

As **local leaders across the UK**, we see the challenges our communities face. We recognise our responsibility to tackle the climate emergency and protect our environment to secure the future for them and for people around the world.

In 2019, the UK Parliament passed legislation to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero by 2050. This was to keep in line with international commitment in the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. But science tells us **we need to start now and make rapid reductions** much sooner.

We will do everything within our power and influence to rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We will bring our **council emissions to Net Zero by 2030*** and we will work with our residents and businesses to bring our wider **communities' emissions in line with Net Zero as soon as possible** (and by 2045* at the latest).

We will continue to lead the UK's response to Net Zero, going ahead of the government goal and taking the first steps with urgency. We will make substantial progress within the next decade to deliver Net Zero. With greater powers, we would go further, faster.

We will be **bold and brave**, carrying out strong climate action now and building prosperous, secure and more resilient communities that are healthier, cleaner and safer, in ways that follow the science and are practical and achievable.

We pledge to **assess** our largest impacts on climate change, **prioritise** where action needs to be taken and **measure** and **monitor** progress towards targets. We will reduce our emissions at source and limit the use of carbon offsets as part of the global effort to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

As local leaders, **we are uniquely placed to help tackle the climate emergency**. We are closer to the people who live and work in our communities, so we have a better understanding of their needs. This means we can collaborate with them to build consensus for the solutions we need to transition to a Net Zero society that delivers multiple benefits and is fair, just and works for everyone.

We have come together from local authorities across the UK to share knowledge and collaborate with each other, with businesses and our residents to deliver action now. And we will also use our experience of our ability and achievements to advocate to the UK government in order to accelerate the transition to a Net Zero society.

As a nation, we have demonstrated throughout our history that we are able and willing to lead on finding solutions to the challenges the world faces. The success and prosperity of our nation has largely rested on our ability to harness the power of dirty

fossil fuels. It is now our shared responsibility to turn this ingenuity to solving the climate emergency in a way that has a positive impact on our communities. **We need to ensure our future is better than our past.**