



# Resetting Local Responsiveness to Deliver Climate Resilience

This presentation covers:

- A. Outline of the status of the climate & ecological crisis we face.
- B. How local authorities, in having an essential role in delivering transformation towards Net Zero, could effectively respond by mobilizing resident associations\* to help develop & deliver suitable measures for climate resilience and, thereby, help foster a diffusion of a cultural shift towards a low-carbon economy.
- C. The potential role of residents associations (RAs) to enable within its own area, and via networking between other RAs, and accelerate the diffusion of best practice localized changes to improve climate resilience and promote low-carbon culture within their communities.
- D. The essential means by which the local authority can identify (GIS) and extend the coverage of residents associations across its area.

*\*N.B. For the relevance of the argument expressed by this presentation, the terms 'Residents Association', 'Tenants Association', 'Neighbourhood Association' or 'Community Association' could be considered interchangeable, except for the caveat that the desirable population of households should be below 1,000.*



## The Climate & Ecological Crisis Changes **EVERYTHING**

The “unequivocal” virulence of the changing climate means we have about **10 years to bring about major changes.**

**For the welfare of its citizens,** Governments cannot afford to take any mis-steps in the direction of change that is now needed.

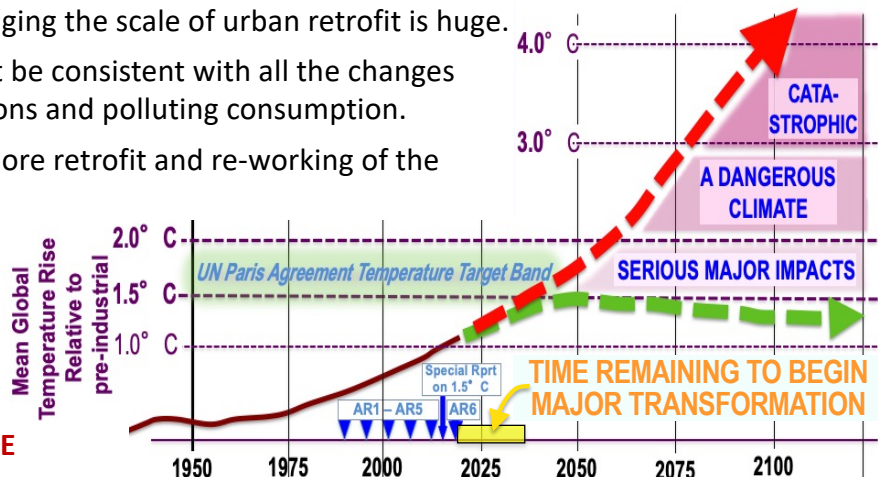
**ALREADY** the burden of managing the scale of urban retrofit is huge.

**ALL urban development** must be consistent with all the changes now needed to rein-in emissions and polluting consumption.

**We cannot afford** to create more retrofit and re-working of the urbanised built environment.

**ALL OUR STEPS NOW  
MUST BE CORRECT.  
WE CANNOT AFFORD  
TO TAKE MIS-STEPS.**

**ALL MUST BE FIT FOR PURPOSE  
FIT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

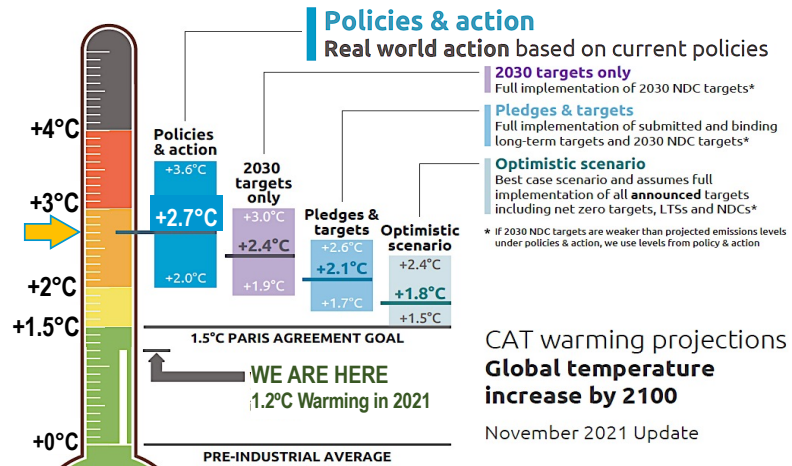


## The Climate & Ecological Crisis Changes **EVERYTHING**

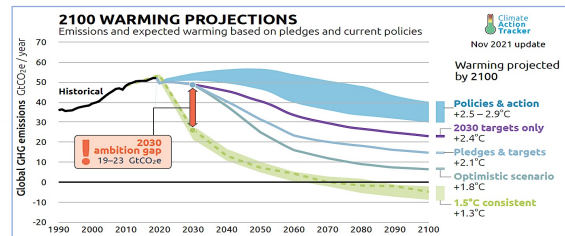
From COP26, following declarations by nations on GHG emissions, the world is on track to use up by 2030 the *entire* carbon budget limit that would likely hold global temperature rise to within 1.5°C. - the carbon budget that should be shared out until mid-century.

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CAT warming projections  
**Global temperature  
increase by 2100**  
November 2021 Update



## Transforming towards Net Zero: The Role of Local Government

- **Reaching net zero will require** an economy-wide transformation, led by central and local government with **support from communities**.
- This transition has the **potential to unlock substantial benefits**.
- BUT the **cost of delay or inaction** could be **much higher**.
- **People's lives will** have to **change**.
- Communities will **need a dialogue about the 'why' and 'how'**.
- The **transition** will be **successful ONLY IF** local government works with their communities, ensuring **engagement is fully inclusive**.
- The **effectiveness** of public communications & engagement **will be critical**.
- This means **maximizing opportunities for** & between **stakeholders to engage**.

## Transforming towards Net Zero: The Role of Local Government

International standards of ISO 37000 are intended to be very useful for local governments in establishing management systems for sustainable development.

*Effective stakeholder engagement and relationship building is a cornerstone of good governance and provides the organization with the ability to understand stakeholder requirements of the organization and co-create services and products of worth to stakeholders, increasing stakeholder value.*

Source: ISO 37000 – Governance of Organizations (2021)

In the context of acting upon the Climate Crisis the local authority, with respect to the needs for ‘Community Involvement’, must address the question:

***‘How best to understand the needs and aspirations of the communities within its governance?’*** Thus, the nature and means of communicating and receiving feedback must be considered.

## The Typical Role of Community Associations

*Typical ‘needs and aspirations’ of, for example, Residents Associations:*

- improve & defend their local built & natural environment;
- promote charitable purposes for health & well-being
- promote a culture of local stewardship
- encourage sharing of experience, skills & knowledge for the above.

Place-based residents associations (RAs) have a potential role to enable accelerated community awareness & feedback to local government on any number of issues. With the urgency to address the climate crisis this role needs to be exploited.

The local authority is ideally placed to facilitate formation of new RAs and to enable networking between RAs for the diffusion of best practice localized changes to improve climate resilience and promote low-carbon culture within their communities

## The Nexus between Local Government & Resident Associations for Climate Resilience

### Imperative for Urban Sustainability & a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Culture



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## The Nexus between Local Government & Resident Associations for Climate Resilience

### Examples of local **CLIMATE SOLUTIONS** requiring community engagement:

- Changed **energy systems**: renewables & localisation.
- Building **refurbishment/retrofit** & community energy conservation programmes.
- Promoting all **new development** to be **Net Zero Carbon**
- Promotion of high **quality urban place-making**.
- Increase community-based **urban food growing** capacity.
- Physical changes to settlements to prioritise **accessibility** - not mobility.
- Promotion of **active transport** infrastructure.
- Planning for integrated **urban green infrastructure**.
- Re-skilling & training initiatives to **empower communities** to localise their economy & skills, and to foster circular economy principles.
- **Nature based Solutions** climate mitigation & adaptation (Eg. Afforestation; peatland & saltmarsh restoration)

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## Local Authority – Community Interaction & Climate Resilience

The most efficient way of delivering public services is by ensuring the very local communities in receipt of services are actively engaged in helping to shape the specification of services being delivered.

There are essentially **three ways** of **how the LA determines** its **actual service** & political mandates.

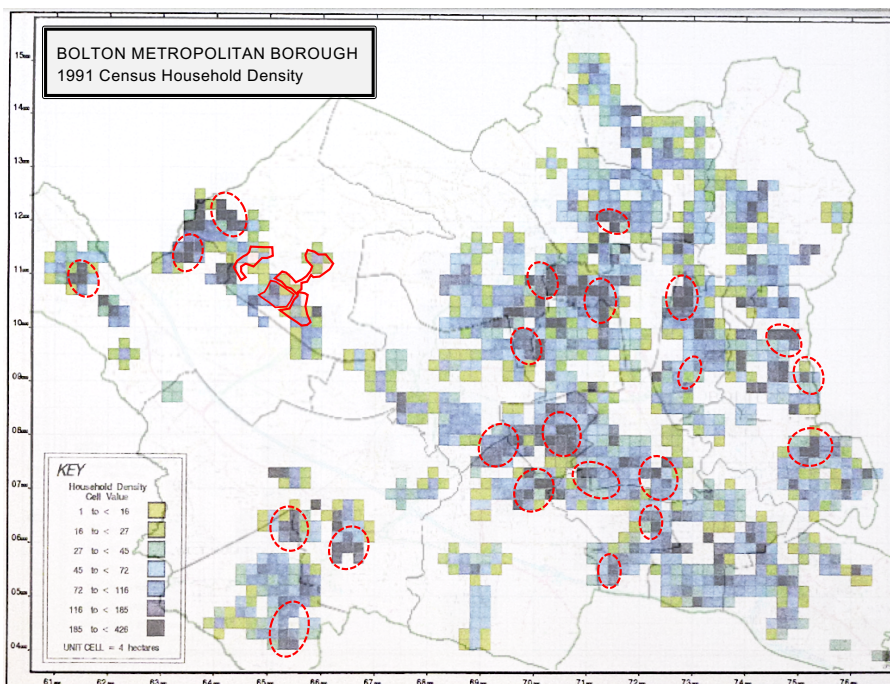
- a) A combination of statutory obligations & political mandate
- b) Reactively due to arising issues – either through councillor feedback of NIMBY reactions
- c) A **THIRD ARM** of enabling the local authority-community communication/interaction.

This **THIRD ARM**, mostly relates to **public meetings and consultation processes**. Austerity has not only severely challenged local government’s institutional capacity to deliver its services but also to hold regular public meetings at a neighbourhood level. The recent pandemic has severely impacted. One inevitable response for a local authority could be a more inward focus on its own institutional capacity to deliver services, which would be less than ideal.

**An extension of this THIRD ARM could be to harness and encourage resident associations** to help frame development & delivery of its public services. **This especially applies to suitable measures for climate resilience and help in fostering a diffusion of a cultural shift towards a low-carbon economy.**

## An Example of Density Mapping for a Local Government Area

( Applying Surface Population Density mapping based on Census Data )



Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis of household density hotspot areas can identify candidate neighbourhoods where new residents associations could be promoted.

Example of high density areas that may represent existing or potential RAs

### NOTE

This mapping is based on a 200m grid sq (4ha) and through surface population mapping can represent relevant Census data. Surface population mapping has the great advantage of maintaining a constant spatial unit against which a demographic variable can be best appreciated and compared across a broad geographic coverage. Generally, this form of GIS analysis has been inadequately used by the planning profession.

## Local Authority intervention to promote enhanced stakeholder engagement through development of community associations

### Key Steps

**Firstly**, a **stocktake** is needed by the local authority **of what community/residents' associations** actually exist, with formal constitutions. The local authority must coarsely map the geography of these areas describing *indicative* provisional boundaries. An initial network of associations is established & shared.

**Secondly**, the local authority draws up a **model guidance** (With a simple constitution template) for setting up a community/residents' association as a basis for founding new formally constituted community associations.

**Thirdly**, the local authority, **using household density criteria, identifies** geographical hotspots of higher density **areas**, using GIS with census data, **more conducive to formation of viable community/ residents' associations** [A threshold density is likely to be above 30 dwellings per hectare].

**Fourthly, through engagement**, partly cascaded through existing residents' associations, the local authority sets about **achieving a patchwork of associations across its area**. The **inception meeting** for setting-up a neighbourhood association would **involve a community discussion to draw up a basic SWOT analysis** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats). This **would result in a draft document** that **encourages the community** to take itself forward **towards a formally constituted body**.

## Benefits of a High-performing Stakeholder Interaction System for Climate Resilience

By systematic development of community associations to cover a majority of a local authority's population, the governance for the well-being of its citizens can be greatly enhanced. Key benefits are:

- A. Community involvement** in consultation processes – can be **greatly facilitated**, reducing the local authority resources needed for those processes whilst improving quality of interaction; for the local authority benefits of efficiency and effectiveness.
- B. Public engagement around the transition for a Net Zero** – public understanding around climate change and its implications can be **accelerated** and **intergenerational exchanges** about local actions can be **advanced towards practical action** around local climate adaptation & mitigation.
- C. Improving ability of local authority to deliver systematically grants and work packages**, relating to climate adaptation and mitigation (eg. Retrofit), can be greatly enhanced because there would be a pre-existing network of contacts across its area that can help **fast-track communication**. The **facilitated sharing of best practice** amongst community associations becomes easier and more rapidly transmitted, serving to catalyse development of widespread beneficial actions and their *modus operandi* of implementation.