



**Beyond Targets:**  
**The wider benefits of  
climate action**

**UK:**  
**100**

# How we delivered this?

**Ten case studies:** highlight local projects that cut emissions and achieve wider benefits.



## Objectives

- **Explain what the wider benefits are and why they matter** for local and national policy goals
- **Present evidence** that climate actions can deliver wider benefits
- **Analyse the common barriers** encountered in realising wider benefits
- **Provide clear recommendations** for integrating co-benefits at a local & national level



Homes & Buildings



Clean Air



Energy



Decarbonising  
Transport



Nature

# Key Findings:

## Birmingham

Nitrogen dioxide levels **fell by ~13%** in one year

**£3.67m** a year in avoided climate damage

**£0.5m** estimated savings of per year to NHS

## Cambridge

**£2.55m** invested in local supply chain

**£3m** green skills growth (investment in training facility)

**£320** average home energy bill savings

## Leeds

**£3.95m/ year** avoided in climate damage costs by 2030

Fuel savings of **£200,000+/ year** for residents

**60% of £45m** initial spend stayed local

## Liverpool

**£46,965** saved from avoided carbon emissions

**Estimated £3m** in visitor spending

**Over 5.2m litres/year** of stormwater diverted

# Why isn't everyone doing this?

- **Councils face tight budgets and urgent social needs.** Climate projects can seem like an added cost or nice-to-have, lacking immediate payoff.
- **Short-Term pressures:** Election cycles and annual budgets push decision-makers toward quick wins. Carbon reduction benefits are long-term and global
- **Lack of consistent frameworks and data:** The wider benefits of climate action are often treated as secondary or anecdotal
- **Fragmented governance:** These make it difficult to design and deliver joined-up approaches that capture and account for co-benefits
- **Lack of capacity:** Insufficient analytical capacity and technical expertise limit the ability to develop robust, evidence-based business cases
- **Funding & budget Silos:** Often, the department paying for a climate project isn't the one reaping the savings. This can create hesitation to invest, even when the overall value is clear.

# Key Recommendations



Support climate conversations that go “beyond targets”, helping national and local government communicate the wider public benefits of climate action.



Strengthen the Green Book by HM Treasury and require its consistent use in funding decisions, expanding criteria to fully reflect societal value, not just direct costs.



Embed wider benefits in future devolution deals for combined and strategic authorities, underpinned by cross-sector Partnership Boards to drive progress in areas such as warm homes, green energy, and nature recovery.



The government should ensure that legislation, strategies, and regulations are structured to maximise opportunities to unlock the full range of co-benefits throughout planning and delivery.



Develop national frameworks and tools to support consistent tracking of climate outcomes and co-benefits, and provide dedicated funding and capacity-building support for local government to use them effectively.



# Practical steps councils can take now



**Bake wider benefits into decisions:** Make it standard practice to evaluate climate initiatives for their economic, health, and social outcomes.



**Build cross-department teams:** Set up internal working groups or taskforces that bring officers from different departments together on climate projects and give them joint objectives.



**Engage and communicate creatively:** Develop a narrative that climate action = community improvement and engage with residents.



**Leverage funding and partnerships:** Don't fund climate projects alone if others benefit as well - seek NHS funding for air quality or heat projects that improve health.



**Track and share outcomes:** Establish simple metrics for co-benefits and monitor them alongside carbon metrics.

UK:  
ioo