

UK CLIMATE COMMISSIONS AND PLACE-BASED CLIMATE ACTION: EVALUATING POLICIES, GOVERNANCE, NETWORKS AND SCALES

British Academy Policy Insight Case Study

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Introduction

This Policy Insight Case Study contributes to the British Academy's *Where we Live Next* (WWLN) Public Policy programme, which is exploring environmental sustainability through the lens of place and place-sensitive policy. WWLN seeks to examine how visible different places, and the people and cultures within them, are to decision-makers when they make decisions about the environment, and how policymaking in this area could be strengthened. The programme builds on the evidence from the Academy's previous programme of work, *Where we live now*, which explored what places mean to people and why, and what place-sensitive policy making might look like.

The case study presented here, involved working with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded Place-based Climate Action Network to provide evidence of the various governance, policy, networked and scalar relationships between climate commissions and local, national and international climate agendas, through the lens of place-shaping.¹ Climate commissions are “city-wide partnerships bringing together people from the public, private and civic sectors who work collaboratively with the local authority to help drive climate action” (PCAN, 2023). The intended audience for this research includes local and national public, private and third/community sector stakeholders within the climate governance and policy domains, but an emphasis is also provided on the scalar interchange of climate policy best practice between local and national government end-users.

The need for place-based climate action has been augmented by climate emergency declarations across the world since 2016, by different levels of government, and non-governmental organisations. They have presented local governments and actors in particular, an opportunity to change the climate policy and governance landscape by stimulating local action that can contribute to national climate policy (Howarth, Lane & Fankhauser, 2021). At the time of writing, it is expected that national UK policy on climate mitigation will coalesce around the Net Zero Strategy: Building Back Greener (BEIS, 2021). The Net Zero Strategy also forms part of the ambitious Conservative policy mantra of ‘Levelling Up’ (HM Government, 2022). In turn, the Levelling Up programme has positioned ‘place’ as a central within current UK public policymaking. The ability to implement effective national mitigation policy has been obfuscated by continued energy prices rising, causing en masse economic hardship and disenfranchising many social groups. Additionally, Chris Skidmore's recent Independent Review of Net Zero (2022) has been highly critical of national climate policy, arguing for an economic reframing of net zero through green investment growth alongside a need to tackle barriers to growth, including regional inequalities. The above suggests that place-based climate actions will play an increasingly significant role in contributing to shaping national mitigation policy agendas in future years.

Likewise, UK national policy attention to climate adaptation will likely coalesce around the five-year National Adaptation Programme (NAP), which is on its third iteration (2023-2028). This is informed by the five-yearly Climate Change Risk Assessment process (CCRA), administered by the UK Climate Change Committee (UKCCC), the most recent being CCRA3. Although in the devolved regions there are specific adaptation programmes that will have an important influence on place-based adaptation policy action. In Scotland, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act (2009) places a duty on ministers to establish a programme on adaptation after every CCRA. In Wales, the UK Climate Change Act places a duty on ministers to report on Welsh Government adaptation objectives, actions and future priorities. In Northern Ireland, the UK Climate Change Act makes a provision for the NI Executive to publish a climate change adaptation programme after each CCRA too. The 2021 UK Climate Change Committee Advice Report has warned the UK government that the gap between the level of climate risk the UK faces, and the level of adaptation underway has widened, and that national

government should be leading action through further investment in adaptation planning and response (UKCCC, 2021: 11). Recent adaptation policy and governance research by these authors have shown there remain missing interconnections between different scales of climate policy and governance, particularly with respect to the attention given to climate adaptation and resilience, and how it is governed, at the local scale (Kythreotis et al., 2020a; Kythreotis et al., 2020b; Howarth et al., 2020). Arguably, the interconnections between climate change mitigation and adaptation, economic development, social well-being and place-based action haven't really been addressed systematically through current national policy realms, resulting in a potential protracted crisis of climate policy and governance across the UK in future years.

In response to this looming crisis, climate commissions have sprung up across the UK to help translate local climate policy into action 'on the ground' to bring about transformative, place-based change in both mitigation and adaptation actions. Over the past 4 years, the ESRC-funded Place-based Climate Action Network (PCAN) has been at the forefront of working with and supporting climate commissions in embedding place-based climate action, emphasising the importance of engaging researchers and academics, and decision-makers in the public, private and third/community sectors to deliver the step changes needed for more concerted climate action. Notwithstanding the importance of state-led policy initiatives on climate change writ large, there is an urgent need to engage a wider range of public, private and third/community sectors in shaping place-based climate action. Recently commissioned research by PCAN involved an evaluation of the efficacy and resourcing of PCAN climate commissions over the last four years (see Pringle et al. 2022).

This case study builds upon the PCAN research by evaluating the various governance, policy, networked and scalar relationships between climate commissions and local, national, and international climate agendas, to enhance understandings of place-based climate governance challenges, and how such a UK case study can inform tangible, evidence-based climate policy solutions, downscale and upscale. Three central research questions are addressed:

1. What are UK climate commissions doing to address local climate mitigation/adaptation through the lens of 'place-shaping'?
2. How are commissions adopting an inclusive/pluralistic approach when engaging different sectors through new insights into place-based governance action?
3. How are climate commissions shaping (or being shaped by) local, national and international climate policy agendas?

Methodology

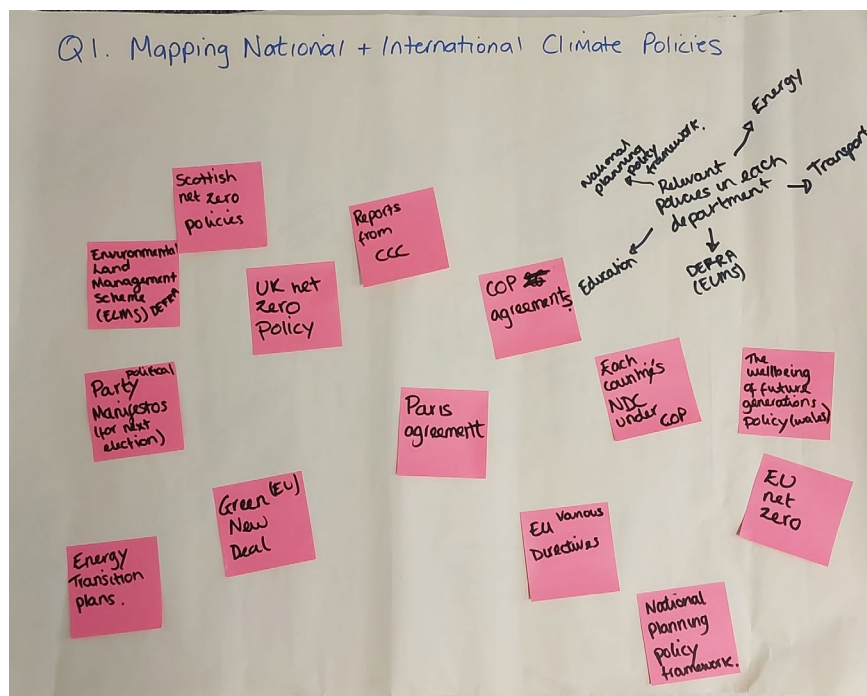
The project lasted 6 months (27 March to 30 September 2023). To better understand the governance, policy, networked and scalar relationships between climate commissions and local, national and international climate agendas we used three methods: a survey, in-depth interviews and a policy insights networking workshop. The survey was co-designed by the team, and it comprised of 25 open and closed questions. It was circulated during May to July 2023 via the Place-based Climate Action Network (PCAN) to the UK Climate Commissions (England, Scotland and Northern Ireland), the PCAN Plus network and a critical geography forum. We received 21 responses: 10 representatives from Climate Commissions from across the UK; four from local authorities, one from a university hospital and six from local climate action organisations/networks. The survey included two questions asking if they would be willing to be interviewed and 14 of the 21 survey respondents provided their contact details. They were sent an interview request with an information sheet and consent form. Of the 14, eleven people agreed to be interviewed (six from UK climate commissions, one

from a county council and four from local climate action organisations/networks. Interviewees were asked to elaborate on their survey answers and reflect on questions related to the three research questions. The interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams and recorded. Each interview was transcribed, anonymised and analysed according to the three research question themes. In addition, we held a policy insights networking workshop on the 18 September 2023 at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) which was attended by 16 people from representative groups like Climate Commissions, local climate action groups, academics and students working on climate action etc.

Participants at the workshop worked in groups on three activities:

1 Mapping National and International Climate Policies: participants were asked to brainstorm the key and/or relevant national and international climate policies, strategies or goals (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Response of a group to activity one



2 Mapping Local Climate Policies and Actions: participants were asked to note down the key local climate policies, strategies and actions i.e., providing examples from their local place on issues such as the key climate challenges and any actions/policies/strategies to address these, the key sectors involved which focus mainly on biodiversity, renewable energy, retrofit housing, sustainable transport etc (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Response of a group to activity two

3 Policy Integration Brainstorm/Mapping: participants were asked to create a visual map of the connections between local evidence, proposed national and international climate policy goals and strategies. They were asked to brainstorm how the gap between local evidence and national/international policy goals can be effectively bridged (see Figure 3):

- Noting the similarities/common goals/targets/sectors
- Noting the gaps/what is missing
- What are the barriers to making these connections?
- Ideas on how to successfully connect between the scales
- Anything else?

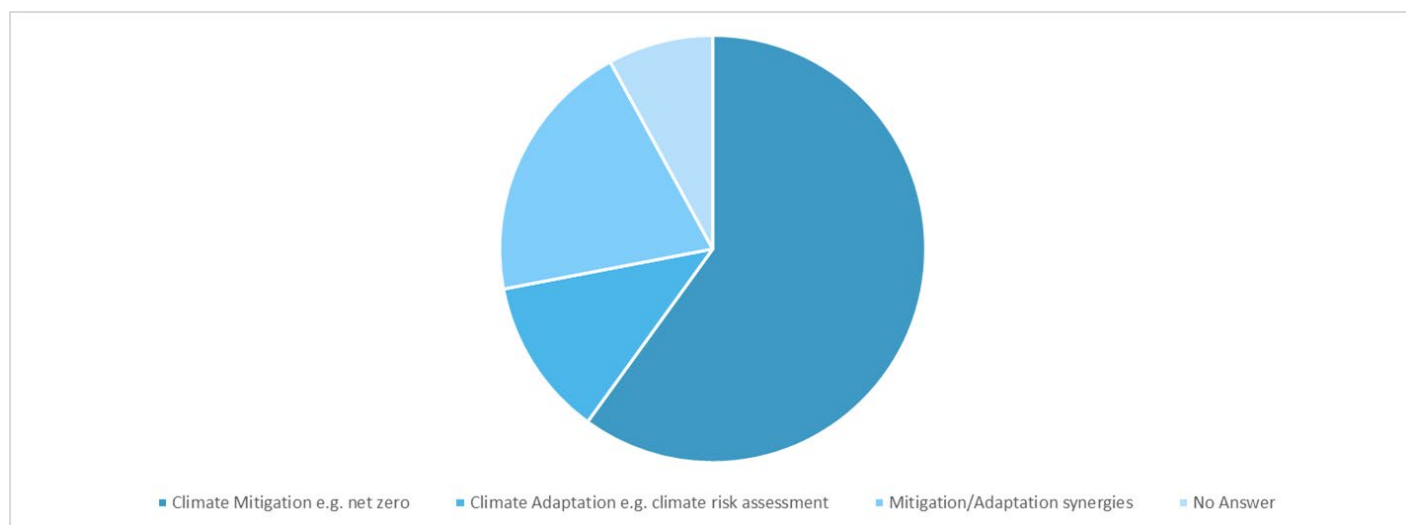
It is important to note that research did not aim to evaluate Climate Commissions because this has been done elsewhere (see Pringle et al. 2022; Howarth et al., 2023) but rather it was to examine whether they are addressing climate mitigation and adaptation through the lens of place-shaping (RQ1 on place, governance and policy); assess how inclusive and pluralistic Climate Commissions are (RQ2 on place and networks) and to what extent Climate Commissions and other climate-related governance mechanisms are shaping or being shaped by national and international climate policies (RQ3 on place and scale).

Key findings and recommendations

1. What are UK climate commissions doing to address local climate mitigation/adaptation through the lens of ‘place-shaping’?

According to our survey there is a predominant focus on mitigation i.e. 60% of our survey respondents (Figure 3), particularly the pursuit of net-zero goals; 12% climate adaptation; 20% mitigation/adaptation synergies and 8% gave no answer. Respondents were asked to tick all that apply and in interviews with 11 of the 21 survey participants, there was some confusion about which activities were climate mitigation and which were climate adaptation for example, when asked to elaborate on their activities, some were unable to give concrete examples and said that “those technical terms are not helpful for people in a lay sense” (BACC10) whereas others cited net zero actions such as developing roadmaps to net zero or supporting the creation of climate action plans. Adaptation efforts mentioned in interviews were concerned with flooding e.g. River Thames but whilst there was an awareness of this, it was not the focus of Climate Commissions.

Figure 3: Survey response to a question about the focus of their work



Some Climate Commissions express a desire to shift away from climate emergency rhetoric and instead focus on climate adaptation or finding synergies between mitigation and adaptation. However, they face significant barriers, such as insufficient financial resources, a lack of personnel, and weak governance, often leading to a fragmented approach.

There is uncertainty about how Climate Commissions should proceed, with some viewing climate adaptation, for example, as the responsibility of other entities, such as local authorities. However, our research showed that Edinburgh takes a different stance, asserting that adaptation isn't a significant concern for them due to the absence of heatwaves and flooding, unlike other parts of England. This underscores the importance of tailoring local responses to adaptation based on the unique climate risks of each location, necessitating the use of local evidence and data to inform context-specific policies.

“I think this is a general feature of UK climate policy and of many of the commissions that the focus has been on mitigation not adaptation or not on trying to unify them, and that’s something we might come

back to later. At the time there was a sort of wave of climate protest and a general rising of consciousness, as you know with XR and with the school strikes so 2018 to 2019. So, we're kind of in a Climate Spring as one of my colleagues called it where you had this general increase in anxiety and awareness and declaration by policymakers across the spectrum. So, you had lots of declarations of climate emergency going on, including in Surrey. So it seemed to us that there was a sort of breakthrough moment coming along, some kind of social tipping point might have been reached and the focus was very much on mitigation on trying to live up to the Paris accord, holding governments to account, making more ambitious commitments at local and regional level and we were part of that. And. I suppose the mitigation process just felt more urgent than the adaptation at the time, it wasn't that we sat down and said, right, were only gonna be interested in mitigation. It was just that mitigation was the focus of all of that wave of interest in climate action." (BACC14)

Efforts are underway to engage local businesses in climate action tailored to their specific locations. For instance, the Surrey Climate Commission, with the university playing a pivotal role, has established small business environmental sustainability awards. These awards serve as an effective place-shaping mechanism for raising awareness about climate issues.

Recommendations on Place, Governance and Policy

- There needs to be more foregrounding of place-based climate action that integrates mitigation and adaptation activities to ensure effective, sustainable place-building and avoid silo working.
- Climate Commissions are useful governance mechanisms to assist local authorities in incorporating climate adaptation into place-based climate action agendas above and beyond the focus on the net zero agenda.
- National government needs to support and engage more directly with local businesses in ramping up local net zero and adaptation initiatives by incentivising local authorities to run sustainability award schemes, for example, in the area of place-based climate action. This would encourage local businesses to think more clearly about the place-shaping agenda in their business plans and how environmental sustainability is embedded in such plans.
- There needs to be education around what constitutes a place-based climate action agenda. This will need to explain to citizens complex climate terms in language that is easily understood so citizens can act on that knowledge. Education that moves beyond public awareness initiatives has the potential of encouraging citizens to be proactive in shaping the places where they live. Climate Commissions are a useful conduit for educating citizens (see also Pringle et al. 2022; Howarth et al., 2023).

2. How are commissions adopting an inclusive/pluralistic approach when engaging different sectors through place-based governance action?

Climate Commissions are pluralistic in that they provide a local forum that enables the voluntary and private sector to communicate with different public sectors (water, transport, local government, public health, housing, energy, planning etc) and existing partnerships (climate partnerships, economic partnerships etc). Notably though there was no empirical evidence of formal public sector partnerships with either private or third sector organisations that orchestrated local climate action. This is important because it shows how the governance of place-based climate action remains ad-hoc. This is where the role of Climate Commissions are important, as they can act as a channel between government, business, the voluntary sector and also to parish and community level. It was felt that it is beyond the scope of local authorities to keep abreast of local climate

action which means there can be lots of disconnected initiatives. Climate Commissions can play a role in bridging local climate action in that they can enable and facilitate networking between existing climate action initiatives and/or people with climate action expertise and/or interest. This supports the report by Howarth et al (2023: 11) who found that Climate Commissions are “convenors of conversations” that can focus on climate action and spread responsibility within a location and to broader actors across the area, ensuring they can act collaboratively and provide a consistent voice for climate locally.

Climate Commissions are not entirely inclusive as not all directly engage residents in the decision-making process. While there may be a desire to include residents, this is often deemed beyond the capabilities of Climate Commissions due to constraints in resources (skills, expertise, time, capacity) and finances. Moreover, such involvement is seen as falling under the responsibility of local authorities, and there is a reluctance to encroach on their jurisdiction.

Some concerns were raised about the transparency, or lack thereof, in the agendas of some local authorities. For instance, in one local council, the Growth Board conducts its meetings in private, with no publication of meeting minutes. However, the economics of shaping a place demand transparent access to economic data, particularly when tackling the net zero agenda. This shows how the place-shaping agenda for climate action across the UK still remains somewhat closed for some non-public sector organisations, and maybe only as inclusive and pluralistic as the local authority in questions deems necessary. A lack of inclusion of private and third sector enervates the notion that commissions have greater policy legitimacy in facilitating greater place-based climate action. However, there was some evidence of co-writing of public-facing climate policies between the local authority and commissions. For example, the Lincoln Climate Commission are listed as author of the Lincoln Climate Action Plan 2030, which would ordinarily be a local authority authored document.

“Communication issues raised when engaging with local people and organisations. Not using words like climate change, climate emergency, fuel poverty. People want to talk about buses, energy, cost of living so its finding ways to engage that means something to the local place. Links to the issue of mainstreaming climate change and making it relatable.” (BACC6, BACC17)

“Community groups wanted better coordination, listening to citizens voices around climate and especially those that weren’t been heard, and ideas on how community groups could work together and be supported on climate action.” (BACC6).

“Because however much we might not want to be kind of distant experts and white coats. You know, we are basically...and I think there have been some efforts to kind of expand the Commission a little bit to bring in folks that have that kind of community, very place based neighbourhood level embeddedness that can help with this kind of work so, Yeah, it's a skill set that perhaps the founders of the Commission didn't really anticipate that they needed I think, it was set up on the basis of, you know, who's the climate change and energy expert. It's actually, that's not really what you need for a commission to function well locally or it's not all of what you need. You need a whole bunch of other kind of skills, community organising skills. So yeah, that's been a positive learning process. I think it's starting to have some effect. Um, But yeah, we'll have to see what that leads to”. (BACC20)

Recommendations on Place, Networks, and Inclusion

- To ensure more meaningful inclusion that has place-based understandings of climate change at its heart there needs to be a language of ‘hope’ in relation to citizen climate action. Talking about climate emergency, fuel poverty etc can be counter-productive in facilitating pro-active inclusion of citizens. Climate Commissions are already starting to engage with this in their assembly process e.g. Lincoln Climate Commission #ClimateHopeLincoln (Kythreotis et al., 2023).
- It is challenging but viewed as essential to listen to local people and communities around climate and engage those whose voices are excluded or marginalised. Climate Commissions can coordinate between different sectors and stimulate discussions to build successful partnerships that support place-based climate action (Howarth et al., 2023).
- Greater inclusion and engagement does require greater community organising skills. Climate Commissions are more useful governance fora and can be a safe convening space as they draw experts from different sectors and fields that can assist local authorities who only have limited staff support. However, it is important that Climate Commissions encourage commissioner applications with a variety of skills and expertise to ensure that specific place-shaping agendas around climate action can be facilitated and met.
- Local authorities need to ensure that they engage more directly with local citizens either through already established Climate Commissions, deliberative democratic processes (e.g., citizen assemblies and juries) (Kythreotis et al., 2019). Climate Commissions are an approachable governance forum in comparison to the local authority, more often than not, citizens find it difficult to approach local authorities, therefore, have value in facilitating climate assemblies (Lewis et al., 2023; Sandover et al., 2021).

3. How are Climate Commissions shaping (or being shaped by) local, national and international climate policy agendas?

Climate Commissions are mostly **not** been shaped by national and/or international climate policy agendas. Our workshop activity demonstrated that knowledge of national and international climate policies was lower than we expected, and people struggled to list them, relying on those in the group who were actively working on climate policy analysis. The difficulties we witnessed in mapping national and international climate policies was due to the complexity of policies and/or a lack of knowledge about them. Groups found it very difficult to create a visual map of the connections between local evidence and proposed national and international climate policy goals and strategies. One participant said it was because there is a “splat of things that are not linked” and that the “link between national and international climate policies is non-existent and dysfunctional”. Another group agreed that the climate policy landscape was a “mess” at the international and national level partly due to short-termism and that policies are “fragmented spatially”.

Likewise in interviews there was an acceptance that national and international climate policies, strategies and targets played a guiding role especially useful for local authorities to help shape priorities. But there was agreement amongst other participants (Climate Commission and local climate action representatives) that place-based actions were best as they knew the local needs and specificities and could respond appropriately – if given the support and resources to do so.

There was also agreement that national and international policies were a “mess” in that they are difficult for people to keep track of and understand. This is where Climate Commissions and in particular university members can play a role as explained by BACC14 “I also produce every few months and update a slide deck, summarising messages from international bodies and national bodies about climate change so that all the

members of the Commission have that as a resource if they want it, so they can pick slides out of it for the presentations and so on, and that goes to the local authority as well. So that's one of the ways in which I try and turn my university teaching and research into something which is going to provide some useful data. We're hoping to put more of that kind of material suitably tailored for public engagement, onto the Commission website”.

Universities are now playing an important role in local climate action, through their involvement in Climate Commissions, in distilling national and international climate policies that have relevance for local governance, as exemplified by participant BACC14. This could reflect how Commissions are playing an important role in informing policy development by local authorities (Pringle et al., 2022). Other evidence of this includes the Lincoln Climate Commission and university academics co-authoring the 2030 Lincoln Climate Action Plan, which would normally be a local authority solely-owned document. This suggests that the role of universities in shaping place-based climate governance looks to continue, namely because national government support on the net zero policy agenda has started to wane (Kythreotis, 2022), including the most recent changes that soften policies aimed at achieving net zero by 2050, including pushing back the ban on selling petrol and diesel cars from 2030 to 2035 in September 2023.

“National initiatives are great, but it needs to be relevant’ in order to shape local climate action.” (BACC17)

“I think what's interesting is actually maybe at a lower level than that working out how particularly places with two tier authorities, how that all works together. And I think that's huge because they feel that a lot of the focus has been on cities, unitary authorities. I don't feel that there has been enough focus and support for like that's really complicated. Like how do you support those kind of tiered? I mean there's the national level, but even lower than that, those kind of tiered parish and Town Council, District Council, County Council, some places in terms of regional authorities. Like, how does that all feed in with each other? How in terms of partnership working, how do you just add layer upon layer of complexity’ ... It's even more complicated than that because you've got the like, if you're looking at it, you've got the kind of levels of scale in terms of governance. Then you've got the topic overlaps and then you've got the fact that people don't necessarily fit into neat like the districts or the boundaries aren't necessarily how people think of their place. So like what, when you're talking about placemaking like at what's, you know, your local town, you're local district, your local kind of valley, your local, whatever and it's all. It's all messy, which is why I think with the kind of levels of tiers of governance as well, there's a lot of questions around how you make sure there's kind of not duplication and that there's conversations happening in the right places. And I mean it's a mine field really. And you know, let's be honest, local authorities are trying to basically deliver this stuff in a political vacuum. You know, in a vacuum of national policy to support it. Really.” (BACC6)

“I mean in some ways everything we're doing is about kind of trying to plug gaps of bad national policy making. I'm not saying this is the ideal state, but if we had a, you know, a central nation state that was just doing this all for us and insulating homes, installing solar panels everywhere, perhaps we wouldn't need local climate action.” (BACC20)

Recommendations on Place and Scale

- Given that respondents reported a ‘messy’ scalar climate policy landscape, Climate Commissions could hold workshops on how national and international climate policies are related to and can shape place-based climate action in local jurisdictions.
- The “localness” of Climate Commissions, embedded in places was seen as important and their ability to frame conversations in ways that people can engage with. This is useful for engendering place-shaping in the context of national and international policies.
- More recognition at national government level of place-based climate action and the vital role it plays or can play in informing and delivering policy, given that the idea of the national competition state reasserts national and international political priorities above and beyond local priorities (Kythreotis et al., 2020; Kythreotis et al., 2023).
- Climate Commissions are neither shaping or being shaped by national and international policy agendas but are useful forums for highlighting the fragmentation and inconsistencies developed at local, national and international scales.
- More research is required to understand local perceptions of national and international climate policies; the barriers to translating and incorporating national and international climate policies locally and how to solve perceived scalar climate policy challenges of complexity, fragmentation and disconnection and ensure climate policies are relevant to local place-shaping.

Conclusions

The main aim of this British Academy Policy Insight Case Study was to provide evidence of the various governance, policy, networked and scalar relationships between Climate Commissions and local, national and international climate agendas, through the lens of place-shaping. More specifically, through the use of questionnaires, interviews and a workshop, it was to critically examine and discuss the role and value of climate commissions in place-shaping and how they contribute to the British Academy’s *Where we Live Next* (WWLN) programme, which seeks to explore environmental sustainability through the lens of place and place-sensitive policy. Each paragraph below summarises the main findings of the work completed in terms of the research questions addressed.

Regarding Research Question 1: What are UK climate commissions doing to address local climate mitigation/adaptation through the lens of ‘place-shaping’?

We found that policies on mitigation (e.g. net zero) are taking greater precedence at the local scale, and that there needs to be more foregrounding of mitigation-adaptation integration that will help engender more sensitive place-shaping values locally. Climate Commissions could certainly be useful governance tools from which to assist local authorities in facilitating more sensitive and attuned place-based shaping practices of climate policy and governance. However, in order to achieve this, there needs to be greater support from national government that could help encourage and assist Climate Commission actors, particularly from the third and businesses sectors, to contribute more to shape the places where they operate. Climate Commissions already provide valuable resources above and beyond what local authority policy does. Having more stakeholder expertise beyond local authority experience through Climate Commissions will inevitably contribute to a more equitable and holistic place-shaping agenda locally, encouraging a wider diversity of citizens to contribute to local, place-based climate action.

Regarding Research Question 2: How are commissions adopting an inclusive/pluralistic approach when engaging different sectors through place-based governance action?

We found that many Climate Commission members felt there needed to be greater involvement from a more diverse demographic as a means to develop greater place-based understandings of local climate action, and that local authorities could do more to facilitate this through Commissions given their current democratic legitimacy. This would in turn help Climate Commissions draw in new forms of inclusiveness in environmental and climate place-shaping, given that key climate policy stakeholders in local authorities are sometimes less easy to contact than Climate Commissions, who have an array of additional members from the third and private sectors, in addition to local government, who have different skills beyond the formal policy process. In this sense, Commissions can provide a more inclusive approach, a 'safe space', and widened expertise to engage different sectors and citizens to facilitate more open governance that can contribute to the shaping of local climate policy that enshrines place-shaping practices. Such meaningful inclusion and engagement would also assist in creating a positive impression of tackling climate change locally, not just through the technical language of local policy that is often framed in hard-to-understand policy terms, but also through the language of hope, and that everyone has a part to play in shaping their own place through their (climate) actions.

Regarding Research Question 3: How are Climate Commissions shaping (or being shaped by) local, national and international climate policy agendas?

We found that many respondents from Climate Commissions (which included local authority representatives) reported a messy and complex scalar climate policy landscape. Respondents in the workshop agreed on the difficulties of linking how national and international climate policy imperatives translate down to their own particular local jurisdiction. The policy prescriptive nature of these higher scales was therefore seen as a barrier to place-shaping. However, it was agreed that Climate Commissions could be a useful local governance vehicle to help frame conversations of how each policy scale is interlinked and what this might mean for engendering new forms of equitable, local place-based climate action based on highly sensitive place-shaping. However, it was also noted that national government had an important role to play in helping facilitate such a conversation, even though some respondents at the workshop highlighted how national policymaking can sometimes enervate place-shaping environmental sustainability policies by reasserting national economic priorities over environmental ones.

Overall, it was found that Climate Commissions are certainly not shaping or being entirely shaped by national and international policy agendas but are useful forums for highlighting the fragmentation and inconsistencies in climate policies developed at local, national and international scales. This does suggest Climate Commissions are important conduits for communicating what places mean to people and why, and what place-sensitive policy making might look like if Commissions were given greater support nationally. However, more in-depth qualitative research through, for example, focus groups, is required to understand how Climate Commissions can help alleviate citizen perceptions of national and international climate policies being difficult to understand and to communicate in terms of engendering a place-shaping agenda that meets their own needs, as well as governments. The perceived scalar climate policy challenges of complexity, fragmentation and disconnection remain highly relevant to facilitating more valuable place-shaping policy, and Climate Commissions can have a significant role in helping alleviate such tensions, if given greater support from higher policy scales.

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