



Environmental  
Law Foundation

access to environmental justice for all

Wednesday, 27 October 2021

## PRESS RELEASE

### “A lack of local urgency on the climate emergency”

A report released today by the Environmental Law Foundation (ELF) indicates that while there is evidence of positive action by local authorities to address the climate emergency, there is a need for greater urgency if the ambitions of their Climate Emergency Declarations are to be achieved.

The report is the culmination of a nine-month research project carried out by ELF reviewing the impact of local authorities' Declarations around the UK. The research was conducted via ELF's network of university-based policy clinics with eight universities and members of UKELA's Student Working Party researching the different regions of the UK.

Overall, 376 local authorities were reviewed, with around 79% having made a Declaration. With many councils aiming to be 'net zero carbon' by 2030, there will need to be a much greater focus on this in their decision-making processes across all policy areas to meet this target. It is noted that local authorities have great influence at a local level and there are many opportunities for local government led change. However, to achieve the ambitious targets ELF sees a lack of central government funding and guidance

The research also found difficulties in locating, obtaining and assessing information about local authorities' climate change work. In particular, a lack of clearly defined pathways with milestones and monitoring for emissions reduction targets. Equally, detail was often lacking and the quality of the information that was identified was limited in many instances. The report concludes that such points are counter to the requirements of the Environmental Information Regulations. There is also a need for greater public engagement.

Tom Brenan, ELF's Joint Executive Director and Head of Education & Policy, who co-ordinated the project, commented:

“The Climate Change Committee has previously highlighted the importance of public engagement in the climate change conversation and the key role played by local authorities in this. Our research found some good evidence of public engagement across

the country but there needs to be much more of this. COP26 is a great focal point for local authorities to sharpen the detail of information provided and involve local communities in plans and decision-making to address the climate emergency.”

- ENDS -

**Editor’s notes:**

The report, “Local urgency on the climate emergency?” is available on ELF’s website [here](https://elflaw.org/news/local-urgency-on-the-climate-emergency/):  
<https://elflaw.org/news/local-urgency-on-the-climate-emergency/>

For more information about the Environmental Law Foundation or the report, please contact:  
Tom Brennan, Joint Executive Director and Head of Education & Policy: [tom@elflaw.org](mailto:tom@elflaw.org)

The Environmental Law Foundation (ELF) is a charity founded in 1992, working with communities in the UK to secure environmental justice. We do this through free legal advice and information, public legal education, and policy work. Through our network of specialist lawyers, consultants and university-based clinics across the UK, we provide free guidance and continuing support to those in need of assistance: [www.elflaw.org](http://www.elflaw.org)