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Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation in Climate Commissions: Lessons for the Norwich Climate Commission

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BOLUWATIFE IYIOLA
UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

The Norwich Climate Commission is an independent advisory body set up to bring actors from the public, private and third sectors together to support, guide and track the impact of ambitious climate change and sustainability actions across Norwich. We are a partnership of Norwich City Council and the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of East Anglia.



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Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation in Climate Change Commissions in the UK: Lesson for the Norwich Climate Commission

Boluwatife Iyiola

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Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation in Place-Based Climate Governance in the UK

This first section presents a review of existing literature on stakeholder engagement and public participation in local climate governance. Climate change is a global challenge and to achieve climate change adaptation and mitigation, action at the local level is also needed. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2021) Summary for Policymakers notes that urban areas and cities are not excluded from the impacts of climate change and that cities will experience more extreme climatic events such as heatwaves and intense rainfall which will increase flooding and drought in some cities. Cities and other non-state actors such as local communities, businesses, and citizens now have an increasing role in addressing climate change impacts (IPCC 2022b). Climate governance enhances climate action through direct and indirect policies targeted at climate change. For this climate governance to be effective, it requires coordination between the different actors involved. Climate change has gone beyond being a global challenge and has received constant political attention leading to climate governance occurring at different levels between state and non-state actors (Bulkeley 2013). The effectiveness of climate governance requires institutional capacity and the help of independent bodies that go beyond departmental mandates to ensure that citizens, youth, local communities, businesses, political actors, and other civic society actors are effectively engaged (IPCC 2022a).

The terms ‘stakeholder engagement’ and ‘participation’ has been used widely to depict an inclusive form of governance, however, it is still under-theorized and yet to be reviewed critically in the literature on climate change (Few, Brown and Tompkins, 2007; Sarzynski 2015). Other words that have been used in literature to convey the same meaning include “public participation,” “citizen participation,” “stakeholder involvement,” “collaboration”, or “community engagement” (Anguelovski and Carmin, 2011; Howarth and Morse-Jones, 2019;

Sarzynski 2015). ‘Participation’ is used to mean ‘the sense of securing the active involvement of a broad range of stakeholders in decision-making and action’ (Few, Brown, and Tompkins, 2007, p. 47); while a more general definition of stakeholder engagement is that it is a ‘morally neutral practice’ that involves the engagement of stakeholders in a positive way (Greenwood 2007, p. 318).

To characterise participation, 5 distinct elements are involved – ‘who participates, when participation happens, what happens, how much participation, and why the actors participate’ (Sarzynski 2015, p. 54). There are different stakeholders involved in urban climate governance however there remains limited study on the extent of stakeholder engagement and public participation in climate change adaptation (ibid.). In addition, Bulkeley (2013) argues that though non-state actors are increasingly involved in climate governance, it is still overshadowed by municipal authorities and their representatives. Nonetheless, there has also been a shift from the former ways of urban climate governance which were more municipal and voluntary to a more strategic way of dealing with the environmental and social impacts of climate change (ibid.). To deliver a climate-resilient city, Tanner et al. (2019, p. 9) identified five good governance components (including participation) required to include: decentralisation and autonomy, accountability and transparency, responsiveness and flexibility, participation and inclusion, and experience and support. Stakeholder engagement and public participation is therefore essential instrument if climate governance is to be achieved (Anguelovski and Carmin, 2011). Furthermore, participation can happen in a three-dimensional space called a ‘democracy cube’; this is when the three dimensions of participant selection, communication and decision, and authority and power come together in a new governance structure (Fung 2006, p. 68). Fung further argues that participation plays three significant values in democracy – ‘legitimacy, justice, and the effectiveness of public action’ (ibid., p. 66).

So, how then do organisations ensure all citizens effectively participate in local climate action? And why? The answer goes beyond ordinary stakeholder engagement and participation. Mitigating and adapting to climate change using top-down approaches alone will not solve the problem because, in the long term, they lack a wide perspective of knowledge (Howarth and Morse-Jones, 2019); however, combining it with a bottom-up approach is more likely to achieve greater results (Russel and Christie, 2021). Therefore, increasing the resilience of cities to the impacts of climate change across multiple sectors will require effective communication and good collaboration with stakeholders in a way that aligns with the needs of those affected by climate change risks and impacts (Howarth and Morse-Jones, 2019).

It can be seen from the foregoing that if cities are to effectively mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, clear-cut strategies supported by policies will be required. These policies and action plans call for effective public participation and engagement with actors from the public, private, and third sectors. Enhancing adaptation to climate change requires the interplay of sectors and stakeholders to discern 'climate risks, potential solutions, and decision points' (Guida and Howarth 2022, p. 96). It requires input from non-state private and civic actors at the local level where the local government may be devoid of resources such as staff and funding (PCAN, 2021). Stakeholder engagement and public participation are therefore important as it provides evidence and informs the decision-making processes and design of implementation strategy.

What are Climate Commissions?

Climate commissions are independent bodies that work with the local authorities. They are defined by the Place-Based Climate Action Network (PCAN, 2022) as a city- or area-wide partnerships bringing together people and organisations from the public, private and civic sectors who work collaboratively to help drive, guide, support, and track climate action. PCAN is backed by The Economic Social and Research Council (ESRC) and brings together researchers and stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors; and helps to translate climate policy into action by helping cities to deliver impact; and by creating an effective and sustainable network for the delivery of climate action in these cities. (PCAN, 2022). The Leeds Climate Commission became the first of the climate commissions in the UK to be established in 2017 followed by the Edinburgh and Belfast Commissions. The model set out by the Leeds Climate Commission involved facilitating partnerships across sectors, monitors progress, assessing risks, and setting measurable targets that meet the climate targets of the city. This premier climate commission in the UK laid a good example for future climate commissions to come in the UK (Creasy, Lane, and Harvey-Crawford, 2019).

Climate commissions are place-based, and they wield the power to highlight the ‘emotional, symbolic, spiritual and perceived intrinsic values of the environment’, leading them to recognise communities that face the highest risks of climate change and how best to help them (Murtagh and Lane, 2021, p. 23). Climate commissions were created as an experimental way of addressing climate change in urban areas and in the UK, they have been further strengthened due to climate emergency declarations in parts of the country (Creasy et al., 2021; Dyson and Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Howarth, Lane and Fankhauser, 2021). With an underestimated wealth of local knowledge present in these commissions, they help to achieve climate governance contrary to the views held by traditional governance that believe that local political climate action is determined by national and international policies (Creasy, Lane, and Harvey-

Crawford, 2019). The purposes of the declaration of climate emergencies in the UK according to Howarth, Lane, and Fankhauser (2021) could be for the statement of intent, to act as a political movement, or to create local climate action. From a 2020 survey conducted by the UK Local Government Association to determine the actions taken by councils concerning climate action, it was realised that 90% of respondents' councils had already declared a climate emergency, 8% had no plans to declare while 2% were still considering it (LGA, 2020).

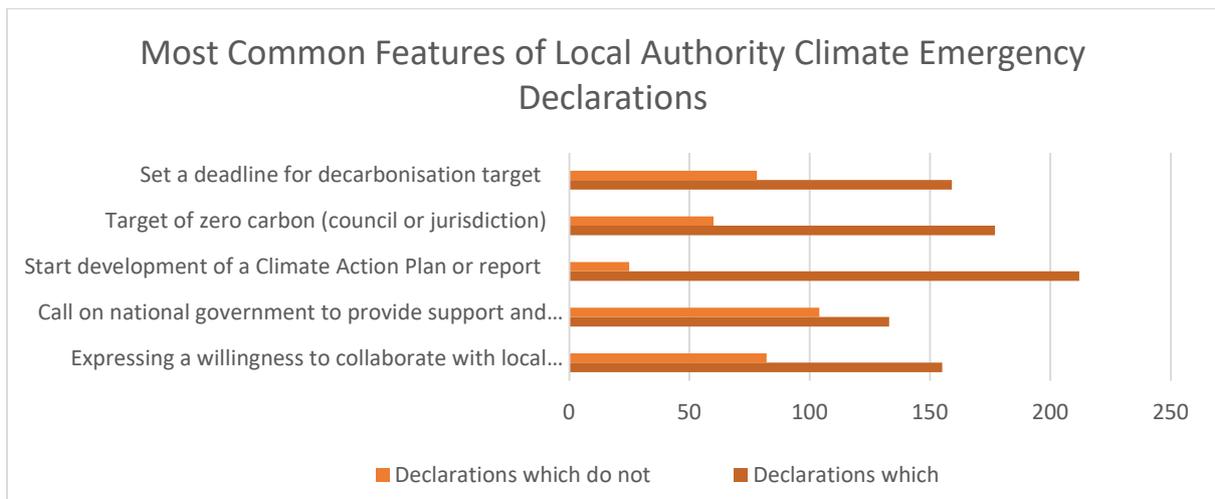


Figure 1: Most Common Features of Local Authority Climate Emergency Declarations (Adapted from Harvey-Scholes 2019)

Most of the emergency declarations focused on climate change mitigation and with the most common features including the development of a climate action plan or report, setting a target and deadline for decarbonisation, and expressing the willingness to engage with people in local communities, organisations, and businesses (Dyson and Harvey-Scholes, 2022). As shown in Figure 2, most UK Tier 1 and Tier 2 local governments such as boroughs, town, and city councils, have declared climate emergencies, and oftentimes, these have been driven by civil society and community groups (ibid.). Out of all these climate emergency declarations, Howarth et al. (2021) report that 62% (mostly local authorities) had backed the declarations with a new or updated climate action plan. The reasons the local authorities did not update their plans were because of a lack of capacity and expertise within local authorities, 2) stretched

funding, 3) poor coordination with disorganised support from the national government, and 4) institutional complexities in areas such as housing and transport (ibid., p. 3).

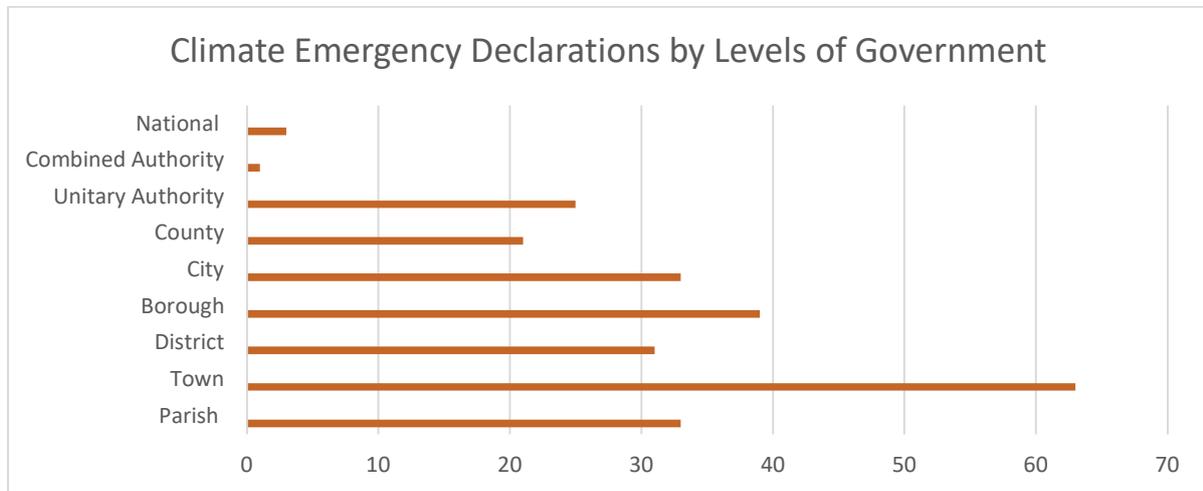


Figure 2: Climate Emergency Declarations by Levels of Government in the UK adapted from Harvey-Scholes (2019)

Methodology

The key objective underpinning this research was to assess existing climate commissions in the UK with the additional aim of making recommendations to the newly formed Norwich Climate Commission regarding stakeholder engagement. This key objective was broken down further into three sub-objectives: 1) To understand the processes involved in the formation of climate commissions in the UK, 2) To understand challenges faced by the commissions, and 3) To understand participation in climate commissions. From these sub-objectives, the research questions were derived.

The research is based on both primary and secondary sources of data collected using different techniques. Secondary data and resources such as peer-reviewed papers, published articles, and reports on websites such as the Place-based Climate Action Network (PCAN) and the UK Climate Change Committee (UKCCC) websites were used. In addition to this, primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in dialogues leading to the production of in-depth knowledge and in comparison, to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews allow for the interviewer to focus the conversations on core aspects of the research (Brinkmann 2020). Semi-structured interviews consist of open-ended questions that allow research participants to answer questions based on how they wish which gives room for some variability (McIntosh and Morse, 2015).

As detailed in my university research ethics application, the selection of participants was based on a list provided by my Tyndall placement supervisor. There were 5 participants in total and they were also members of the Norwich Climate commissions (NCC). Semi-structured interview questions were used to collect primary data to capture the views, opinions, or assessments of these key people in the NCC. As a result of these semi-structured interviews undertaken with the research participants, I was able to gain more understanding of the formation of the NCC and the selection process involved in creating the climate commission.

Additionally, I was also able to understand the strategies used for public participation and stakeholder engagements. All participants were briefed on the purpose of the research through a project information sheet and all research participants signed consent forms before any interview was carried out. Ethical clearance was also sought and approved by the School of International Development Research Ethics Subcommittee before carrying out the research. The primary and secondary data collected through the techniques were analysed thematically based on key themes to identify key challenges, best practices, and recommendations for effective stakeholder engagement and public participation.

These key themes include (1) Formation of climate commissions; (2) Stakeholder engagement and public participation strategies in climate commissions; and (3) challenges in climate commissions. These themes were analysed further with regard to my findings in the literature review which led to a list of recommendations.

Norwich Climate Commission – A Case Study / Research Findings

Formation and Objectives of the Commission

To help the City Council in its response to its climate emergency declaration by Norwich city council in 2019, the independent Norwich Climate Commission (NCC) was created in late 2021 (although first proposed in 2015). The (NCC) was established to help with the next steps of decarbonisation and adaptation for the city and this commission joined the network of new and evolving climate commissions in the country. NCC is an independent advisory body that brings together actors from public, private, and third sectors to support, guide, and tracks the impact of ambitious climate and sustainability actions across Norwich city to provide leadership and advice in the areas of climate change and sustainability through a team of two co-chairs and 10 “commissioners”. The Commission is co-chaired by the executive director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change and the executive director of community services at the Norwich City Council. The 10 commissioners are from different professional backgrounds and these people volunteer their time to ensure that the Commission delivers on its goal and objectives. The aims of the NCC include achieving citizen engagement, decarbonisation, climate change resilience and adaptation, inclusivity, and biodiversity; while focusing on the areas of net zero, energy, commercial buildings, transport, retrofit, housing, land use, flooding, and nature. When asked about the objectives of the NCC during the survey, the respondents said:

I see the climate commission as a critical friend to the Norwich city council which can help them in their ambitions to achieve net zero or, or as close as possible while advancing knowledge and enabling people to be able to approach issues of climate change sensibly and practically. So, it is really exciting to see that the commission has been created with these goals in mind. (NCC1)

It is about climate commissions springing up to respond to the lack of central government action. We know that there are lots to do and so it is about identifying

the areas where local action is needed and could benefit from and nourishing these efforts to ensure climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. (NCC 4)

For me, it is about having something that brings together expert voices and grassroots voices. It is about creating a forum for some of the people who are working on climate change across Norwich, whether that's through the Tyndall centre or people who are involved in activism. This provides a platform in a neutral space for solving some of the problems around climate change. (NCC5)

To ensure effective delivery of the goals of the Commission and to develop a strategic action plan, the NCC is structured into four strategic working groups: 1) community empowerment, 2) climate risk and adaptation, 3) built environment and land use, and 4) infrastructure and energy (Figure 2). The strategic working groups were a recent plan which allows for two to three commissioners to belong to each of these groups with an appointed coordinator for each group. These groups have allowed ‘specific interests from the climate commissioners to come to the fore for things that they are interested in’ (NCC1).

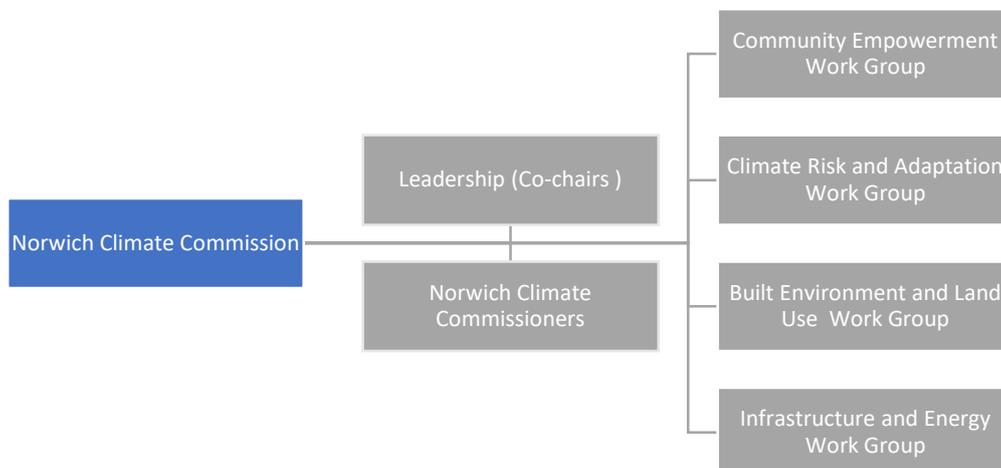


Figure 3: Structure of the Norwich Climate Commission

Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation in Norwich Climate Commission

If cities are to be climate-resilient, they require actions that must consider factors such as wellbeing, health, justice, and equity (IPCC 2022); and giving priority to these factors revolves

around people if effectiveness in sustainability and climate governance is desired. As discussed in the previous section, the NCC has a working group that focuses on community empowerment. This group is the primary group involved in improving the Commission's communication with members of community organisations. Bringing people together for knowledge and experience sharing, inspiration, connections, and achieving local climate action are some of the objectives for this group.

The Commission recognises that it has a 'role to directly facilitate and influence action in the community across the city region' (NCC2). A climate stakeholder survey carried out by the NCC in early 2022 identified the main audiences as 1) Norwich citizens, 2) Norwich businesses, 3) Norwich city council, 4) Youth/Education institutions and 5) Local voluntary and community organisations. The survey also showed that the priorities for communication and engagement were about developing a positive vision, providing information about climate change, and highlighting positive stories and good communication.

The way I imagine the community empowerment work group is that though we are set up by the council and have some authority to talk to the council, we can also use our position to be a middle ground between the council and the policy side of things, and the groups on the ground who may be trying to act on climate change in different ways. These groups may be experiencing barriers or challenges and we can support them by providing experts to help while we also feed back into the policy side of things to allow for a more inclusive approach. This is how I would describe the working group. We also plan to work with community groups such as choirs, drama groups, sports clubs, and any kind of community group that has committed members. We will then act together, using these structures to achieve the commission's goals on climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. (NCC5)

Finally, addressing an issue such as climate change through governance requires efforts that go beyond government but also utilising efforts from the private, public, and civic sectors (Sarzynski 2015). Public participation is also identified as one of the criteria of good

governance at the local level (Tanner et al., 2009); and one of the aims of the NCC is to foster and support citizen engagement with climate change and sustainability. A community empowerment working group that has a communication and implementation strategy in progress, helps to achieve this aim. This communication strategy was in the process of being developed by members of the community empowerment work group. The plan is for the strategy to include effective mediums that will be used by the NCC to engage with Norwich residents, community groups, and other members of the public. Through this dedicated group to stakeholder engagement and public participation, the NCC ensures that the decision-making processes and implementation strategies are robust and well-informed.

There is a whole range of stakeholders across the city and for the Commission to be effective, we will need to directly engage with stakeholders. For example, you have a group of stakeholders within the local authority such as councillors and officers, but you also have various crosscutting community groups. I think it is important to provide a central coordinating hub for all of these various things that are going on within Norwich. In addition, this is also important to avoid duplicated efforts because the whole space is full of lots of people wanting to do stuff and as a result, you end up with parallel activities going on where two groups are basically trying to do the same thing and rather than cooperating, they just end up duplicating effort. (NCC2)

Significant Challenges in Climate Commissions

The challenges faced by local climate commissions in the UK are multifaceted and some of these challenges are caused by limitations in the state, business, and civil societies' capacities to drive climate mitigation and adaptation within communities and wider societies' (Russell and Christie, 2021; Slevin et al., 2022). This section presents some of the significant challenges faced by climate commissions.

Insufficient Financial Support

Limited financial support was the most common challenge identified by the interviewed participants. The lack of power and financial support by central governments serves as a stumbling block for climate commissions to achieve their goals; fulfilling these goals will require commitments that will be shown through financial and power support that flows from the central government (Dyson and Harvey-Scholes, 2022). For example, the NCC lacks the power it needs to achieve the Commission's objective because it sees itself as an 'ordinary' advisory body (NCC2), and the lack of funding 'makes it harder for collaboration' (NCC3). This lacking financial support is needed to efficiently carry out planned activities in areas such as community engagement. Some of the research participants put it this way during the interview:

We do not have any budget, and this makes it quite difficult to reach out to people in a really broad way because that kind of communication needs a well-funded and carefully planned communication strategy. That has been the challenge from the beginning in thinking about community engagement. Also, we are not in the best position to do some of these community engagements, and we do not necessarily have the resources to do a big communication strategy. (NCC5)

In an area such as public participation, it is resource intensive, and financial support is required. Executing any activity in this area needs to be done well to avoid doing more harm than good because people can feel put off if they feel like it is a badly run

event or nothing actually happens when consultation is done. So, getting funding to do any kind of wide public engagement is the biggest challenge for us. (NCC4)

From my perspective, we are pretty limited in our resources (which is sometimes good as it allows commissioners to go in the direction they want to go), but we do not have, huge campaign funds or anything like that. (NCC1)

The Norwich Climate Commission is not the only commission to struggle with the issue of funding. An example of another Commission in the UK that faces this challenge as well is the City of Lincoln Climate Commission where it is expressed that securing more funding is needed to achieve local climate action (Howarth et. al 2021). Furthermore, it is revealed in the same report that local councils find the process of requesting funding from the central government to be challenging due to it being too bureaucratic and consuming too many resources, and that oftentimes, the announcement of the opportunities and the deadlines for submitting these requests for funding were mostly too short.

Limited Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation

This challenge is faced by other place-based commissions such as the Doncaster Climate and Biodiversity Commission and the City of Lincoln Climate Commission (Howarth et al., 2021). It can be challenging for governance representatives to adequately determine the eligibility of participants and criteria for eligibility during participant selection for engagement (Fung 2006). The Belfast climate commission, for example, recognises the importance of representing the youth sector in climate commissions. The lack of diversity was one of the main areas identified as a challenge in stakeholder engagement and relations.

I think about the kind of representation or hearing different voices represented...but for me, I don't think that the work has any credibility if it's not representing black and minority, ethnic or migrant communities, or if it's not representing the working class and the likes of your communities and trade unions. (NCC4)

An inclusive stakeholder engagement creates an avenue to exchange knowledge, build capacity, and increase the knowledge base of the commission whilst creating a more effective local climate action. Excluding minority groups and communities impedes the processes of stakeholder engagement and public participation in climate commissions. This is because achieving this local climate action also means including minority groups such as ethnic minorities and low-income households to avert maladaptation, the effect of which is most likely to affect these marginalised and vulnerable groups adversely and further increase existing inequalities (IPCC 2022b).

Limited consideration for adaptation and resilience in local Climate Action Plans

There is limited focus on adaptation and resilience in climate commissions as most UK local government emergency declarations focus largely on climate change mitigation which is evident in the bold net-zero targets and the steps to reach these targets (Dyson and Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Howarth, Lane, Fankhauser 2021). Often because of scarce resources, climate commissions focus more on mitigation rather than including adaptation and resilience, ignoring that climate change requires novel ways of dealing with it that involve both mitigation and adaptation. The ‘growing public and political awareness of climate impacts and risks has resulted in at least 170 countries and many cities including adaptation in their climate policies and planning processes (IPCC 2022, p. 20). Though there has been some progress, there are still gaps in adaptation levels across regions and sectors and this requires setting clear adaptation goals that are coordinated among governance levels, and by public and private actors (ibid.).

The strategy of the Commission

Another challenge identified in the interviews was the clarity of the overall strategy of the commission. Interview participants noted how it was challenging not to have a full picture of the goals of the commission. A clear-cut strategy of what the Commission needs to achieve is

a significant requirement for any climate commission to be effective. Commissioners need to have a comprehensive knowledge of their roles and responsibilities to achieve their goals in the Commission, and also the mission of the Commission. A clear and concise strategy document that describes these roles and responsibilities will lead to a more efficient climate commission that delivers on climate action goals.

I think it would've been useful or it would maybe still be useful for the commission to have a conversation about what we, what our strengths are. Like, what are we placed to do? Because I feel like that maybe hasn't been made explicit and it makes it quite difficult to shape the work if we've all, maybe got a slightly different understanding of what we're there for really so I feel like I've got a grasp of those very, very kind of top-level objectives. And I've now got a sense of what some of the work is emerging, but I feel there's a gap in the middle for me where I would find it helpful for us to have been a little bit more specific about what we want to achieve and like what I guess what we think our role is. (NCC4)

Knowledge Gap

Another challenge that exists in climate commissions is a knowledge gap and this is often because the members or volunteers in the commissions lack professional expertise in areas such as climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, and biodiversity. This creates a gap in decision-making and implementation of the Commission's strategy to achieve local climate action. The Norwich Climate Commission, however, brings together experts in these fields, also including arts and music, not only 'sciences'.

The danger is that there will be gaps in what we are covering because we just haven't got the people who are kind of knowledgeable about those areas. And one, for example, is biodiversity, which I think is something that we haven't got enough coverage on. (NCC1) [there is though a biodiversity expert on the Commission]

It was found out that although some climate commissions have expert commissioners in the areas of climate change, there were other climate commissions who will require access to

external expertise as necessary to any perceived knowledge gap required to deliver on the goals of the commission. With the core of the Norwich Commission now established and working, it will open-up to additional Commissioners.

Recommendations

Due to the climate crisis becoming more existential as time passes, it has become ever more important for it to be dealt with in a way that is more collaborative and autonomous in terms of governance (Creasy, Lane, and Harvey-Crawford, 2019). Norwich Climate Commission is still in the early stages however, this phase is significantly important for shaping the future of the Commission. This section presents separate recommendations for the Norwich Climate Commission, Norwich City Council, and the National Government if effective climate governance is to be achieved.

For Climate Commissions:

Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation

Robust stakeholder engagement and public participation are required for the realisation of the goals of a climate commission. Including actors from a wider range of sectors will provide a larger knowledge base that will lead to effective climate governance that is transparent and includes inputs from stakeholders and local communities. The composition of stakeholders in climate commissions should be made up of local citizens (including those with limited knowledge of climate change); representatives of local businesses; local trade unions; legal experts for a stronger understanding of policies in the local authority; and land and real estate owners as they stand to lose significant value due to the physical risks of climate change (Connell and Lane, 2022). It should be noted though that Norwich is an ‘expert’ Climate Commission with the objectives previously stated, not a Citizen’s Assembly. Citizen’s Assemblies draw across representative social-economic citizen demographics.

As discussed in an earlier section, a more inclusive stakeholder engagement might be required for local action to be achieved. The design of a participatory forum that is more inclusive and representative creates an atmosphere for climate governance that will have the support and obedience of citizens (Fung 2006). Furthermore, inclusive planning that is ‘informed by

cultural values, Indigenous knowledge, local knowledge, and scientific knowledge can help prevent maladaptation’ (IPCC 2022a, p. 27). It has also been proven that climate-resilient international development requires linking various forms of knowledge such as scientific, minority groups, and Indigenous groups, which are effective and sustainable because they are ‘locally appropriate and lead to more legitimate, relevant and effective actions’ (ibid., p. 29). Finally, as the relationship between place-based climate action and wider local social, environmental, and economic problems becomes increasingly intertwined (Creasy et al., 2021); diverse and inclusive stakeholder engagement and public participation will ensure that no one is left behind in the achievement of sustainable development at the local level.

Strategy Document

The development of a clear-cut strategy that is informed by a more inclusive stakeholder engagement and public participation discussed above will enable NCC to become more effective. This clear and concise document will allow for orchestration between the Commissioners, local council, stakeholders, and the wider public. As discussed in earlier sections, local climate action is most effective and sustainable when bottom-up and top-down approaches are combined. This strategy document will also help the Commissioners to be more aware of their duties and ensure that these align with the goals and strategies of the Commission.

Financial strategy

Local climate action is hindered by a severe lack of financial support and a way to tackle this would be the development of a financial strategy that taps into sustainable finance innovations. An example of this innovation is the PCAN finance platform which helps to identify practical ways of linking local climate commissions to alternative finance options from banks, institutions, investors, or the latest crowd-funding sources (Howarth et al. 2021). An example

of a Commission that is signed up to this is the Doncaster Climate Commission which uses the medium to identify ways in which the commission can have access to sustainable finance and ensure a just transition (Doncaster Climate and Biodiversity Commission report, 2020).

Closing the Knowledge Gap

Although the NCC is made up of people with diverse professional backgrounds, there are still knowledge gaps existing in the Commission. To close this gap, the Commission will have to lean into available connections and networks such as the academic institutions in the city and the PCAN body for science-based research and solutions. The Commission will invite previous applicants now that it is maturing, however, a more extensive range of local actors can offer a wider knowledge base and lead to the effectiveness of the Commission. For example, engaging land and real estate owners as they will be affected by the physical risks of climate change, and including legal experts for better understanding and contribution to policies. Furthermore, ‘having a panel of people with real expertise would be good for the Commission actually, and it would help to draw on a network of people that they know with expertise rather than just the expertise within the Commission (NCC5).

For Local Councils:

City Climate Action Plan

Climate emergency declarations often give way to local climate commissions however, it does not have to stop there. Creating a local climate action plan that will include climate change mitigation and adaptation plans for the city to ensure that the city is resilient to the risks of climate change. Furthermore, this climate action plan should include the approach to the challenges such as public engagement, governance, monitoring, transition skills, and fair funding (CCC 2021). When climate emergency declarations are not acted upon, they lose their value and the opportunity window will be missed (Howarth et al., 2021).

Enhancing Adaptation efforts

Norwich City Council stands to benefit more from improving the city's climate change adaptation efforts. This has been shown to directly benefit councils by making them more resilient to climate risks that affect the local level (Howarth, Lane, and Fankhauser, 2021). Furthermore, adapting to climate change is important for cities and this will require clear-cut strategies and measurable targets that are further supported by policies and regulations (CCC, 2021). Adaptation will need to be adequately integrated into the local climate action plan as this will help to maximise synergies while also reducing trade-offs in terms of achieving climate action (ibid.). Finally, participation has also been known to reduce the gap between top-down and bottom-up approaches in achieving adaptation to climate change (Sarzynski 2015).

The Power of Collaboration

Greater collaboration between local climate commissions, local city councils, and the local community can wield a much stronger power for the achievement of local climate action. This stronger form of collaboration between the stakeholders allows for an in-depth view of the impacts of climate change and views the needs of the stakeholders from a wider perspective, which all leads to a rapid assessment of impacts. This informed collaboration will lead to stronger data access, availability, and quality. Collaboration has its challenges (unwillingness, lack of resources, and time constraints) however, this can be mitigated when there are good channels of communication and where there is trust. (Howarth and Morse-Jones, 2019).

For National Government:

Without an enabling central government framework, local authorities lack the funding and expertise they require to have effective local climate governance. National governments can create a better support structure for local councils in terms of finance and other resources. Additionally, collaboration at the national level with local councils, community groups, and stakeholder representatives can lead to a better assessment of the needs and capabilities of these

actors and ensures that there is an alignment between responses and the needs of those affected the most.

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