SDG\_CAPACities: Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals in Climate Planning in UK and Japan

Record of Information gathered through interviews and meetings and other personal interactions

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# Introduction

As part of the networking grant for UK-Japan research collaboration under the grant ES/S013547/1 (Integrating the sustainable development goals into climate planning in British and Japanese cities, SDG\_CAPACities for short), primary information was collected from local government authorities, individuals and academics. This document provides the primary information gathered through interviews and meetings.

The purpose of the interviews was to understand whether local governments in Japan and UK are aware of the potential for aligning their local climate actions with the sustainable development goals (SDGs). A limited number of interviews were conducted in the third quarter of 2019. This document contains a sample interview questionnaire used for the interactions, and provides a record of the interactions that took place. Information from two Japanese cities (Kyoto and Kamakura) and two UK cities (Nottingham and Leicester) were captured through these meetings/ interactions.

The interviews offered city-specific information and views of local government officials about the local climate actions and their SDG alignment. They also point towards some challenges. The data is being shared publicly to facilitate subsequent use by other users for academic research and studies.

# 2.0 Methodology

Primary data collection through interviews forms an important element of qualitative data analysis. For this study, a case study approach was chosen to gain deeper understanding of local climate action of cities in Japan and the UK. Two cities from each country were considered and the interviews formed part of the qualitative data gathering process.

For data collection through interviews and meetings, the interactions were planned in advance and contacts were established by email with the relevant participants. The project teams have taken advantage of existing contacts with the local authorities for this purpose. The relevant officials with expertise in climate related issues and sustainability were contacted. In each city, one set of interviews took place as recruiting more officials proved challenging. Telephonic interviews were conducted in Leicester with two officials and the information from a business owner was collected via emails. Many officials were unwilling to participate in any interviews because of time constraints and their busy work schedules.

For meetings and interviews, a semi-structured questionnaire was prepared (Table 1 for an example), which was shared with the participants by email. For face-to-face meetings, the questionnaire was used as a guide and the discussion with the officials did not always happen following the structure of instrument. For telephonic interviews, the questionnaire was generally followed. The business participant returned the filled in questionnaire.

In accordance with the research governance policy of De Montfort University, the project received ethical approval (1819/514) from the Faculty Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and Media. The data collection has complied with the ethical approval given to the project. A copy of the Participant Information Sheet is provided in Annex 1.

During the interactions, consent of the participants was taken and the ethical aspects around the participation (voluntary nature of their participation, anonymity of participants, right to withdraw, etc.) were clarified. No audio or video recording of the interactions was done but the participants gave consent to the project team for taking notes. The team members compared notes to arrive at the final record of the interviews/ meeting.

The information came from participants in the UK and Japan. In Japan, the meetings were done in English and the information has been recorded in English. Any translation from Japanese to English and vice versa was done by the IGES team during the meetings or interviews.

##### Table 1: An example of interview questionnaire used in Kyoto, Japan

1. Kyoto is globally known for the Kyoto Protocol. Does this put any additional responsibility on the City in terms of the climate action and adaption plan of the city? (This is specific to Kyoto). For Kamakura, it can be just a simple opening statement – please tell us about the city climate action plans).
2. Please elaborate on the activities undertaken in your city as a part of the climate action and adaption plan and indicate whether anything has changed after the Paris Agreement.
3. Japan is known for promoting voluntary actions by participants. Does the city rely on voluntary participation? How is this monitored?
4. Please give your thoughts on the effectivenss of the actions taken to mitigate the climate change effects and adapt to it. Do you compare the outcomes with other cities in Japan or abroad?
5. Please elaborate the challenges and barriers faced in implementing the climate action plan. How were these challenges addressed? In the UK, budget of city administration is an issue. Is this a constraint here?
6. Please indicate whether the city has defined its Sustainable Development Goals.
7. When considering the climate-related actions, does the Council make any attempt to relate them to the UN Sustainable Development Goals? How?
8. Do you notice any impacts or effects of city’s climate action plans on the local economy or the society? How has the city addressed any adverse impacts? For example, how are they affecting the low-income population?
9. In your opinion are there any benefits of aligning actions on the climate change and sustainability? Why?

The information has been sanitised to remove any personal information and any identifiable information of the participants. The final compiled version of the information has been reviewed by the team members and is considered to be a fair and true representation of the discussions being reported.

# 3.0 Record of interactions

This section presents the detailed notes of the interactions in the UK and Japan.

## 3.1 Meeting with Kyoto City Officials

Venue: Kyoto City Administration office,

Date: 4th September 2019

Interview id: 1

|  |
| --- |
| Interview questions (semi-structured format)1. Kyoto is globally known for the Kyoto Protocol. Does this put any additional responsibility on the City in terms of the climate action and adaption plan of the city?
2. Please elaborate on the activities undertaken in your city as a part of the climate action and adaption plan and indicate whether anything has changed after the Paris Agreement.
3. Japan is known for promoting voluntary actions by participants. Does the city rely on voluntary participation? How is this monitored?
4. Please give your thoughts on the effectiveness of the actions taken to mitigate the climate change effects and adapt to it. Do you compare the outcomes with other cities in Japan or abroad?
5. Please elaborate the challenges and barriers faced in implementing the climate action plan. How were these challenges addressed? In the UK, budget of city administration is an issue. Is this a constraint here?
6. Please indicate whether the city has defined its Sustainable Development Goals.
7. When considering the climate-related actions, does the Council make any attempt to relate them to the UN Sustainable Development Goals? How?
8. Do you notice any impacts or effects of city’s climate action plans on the local economy or the society? How has the city addressed any adverse impacts? For example, how are they affecting the low income population?
9. In your opinion are there any benefits of aligning actions on the climate change and sustainability? Why?
 |

***Q1. Drivers of Kyoto City in terms of climate action and adaptation plans***

* Certainly, the Kyoto Protocol precedent is an important driver for climate action. Since 1996-1997, Kyoto started climate planning for the city greatly due to COP3.
* Every ten years, the anniversary of the Kyoto Protocol takes place. In 2017, an international conference was organised, including high-level government officials, such as Angela Merkel. Some events focus on increasing awareness of citizens and are attended by around 700 local authorities.
* In the COP3-KP+10, an Ordinance including local reduction targets set by the municipalities, which in several cases were more ambitious than the national targets.
* In KP+20, the Kyoto Climate Action Plan 2017 set ambitious adaptation and mitigation targets, such as becoming zero carbon and a decarbonised society by 2050 (in line the 2oC goal of the Paris Agreement and the ambition of not exceeding 1.5oC). In the Kyoto declaration, the city attempts to become not only zero carbon, but also a sustainable city.
* To achieve this 2050 goal, the city is developing a Climate Action Plan 2020-2030.
* Having an ordinance and climate action plan helps in the sense that despite there could be changes in the political parties, it does not influence the city council planning.

***Q2. Mitigation and adaptation strategies conducted by the city***

***Q3. Voluntary actions by participants***

***Q4. Effectiveness of mitigation and adaptation actions***

Mitigation

* Main GHG sources in the city: 1) Industry, 2) Residential, and 3) Business and offices (including public buildings).
* In 2011, nuclear power generation has decreased, while the renewable generation has started to increase. Nevertheless, renewable generation is a challenge, as it requires collaboration with rural areas for the use of biomass.
* 75% of Kyoto has green forests
* There are some waste incineration plants using co-generation (CHP) to generate electricity. In this way, energy for waste aims to follow the waste hierarchy.
* Transport (electric vehicles). There are enough charging points for electric vehicles in the city. However, people do not use them **(challenge)**. It is required to provide more information to citizens. Also the market for electric vehicles is not as strong in Japan as it is in other countries in the world. Finally, the electricity grid needs further decarbonisation.

Adaptation

* Heat waves: The main issue related to heat waves is related to heat strokes, particularly with an aging society. Hence, attention is put on providing a cool environment in buildings with emphasis on energy efficiency and also reducing air conditioning. Welfare officers visit each household and inform residents how to prevent heat strokes. People is usually very aware of disasters (more than climate change awareness). People react very well to the information provided as they are well educated.
* Floods: Riverbanks are monitored and re-constructed based on analysis of weather patterns.
* Water: There are no visual or major changes related to water problems, either supply or water quality. Therefore, actions related to water are not requested by other organisations.

Voluntary actions and community engagement

* There are several community-based engagement projects.
* For example, there are 222 districts that have been designated as eco-districts, which conduct several activities at the school level, from elementary school.

***Q5. Challenges and barriers***

* There is a need to disseminate more effectively information to society, as well as looking at synergies and integration of measures in the new action plan.
* Difficult to engage with business and residents on climate action. Awareness about the environment and climate change is usually low.
* Renewable energy has been introduced in the area emphasising on estimated economic profits, but it has not been very successful.
* Retrofit (or renovation) of households to become more energy efficient is difficult, particularly in traditional houses due to the historical and cultural context.
* Time to achieve the 2050 goal is short.

***Q6 and Q7. Sustainable Development Goals***

* A local agenda 21 constituted by non-state actors already exist, which establish dialogue among non-governmental stakeholders and the municipal government.
* No further details on SDGs were provided.

***Q8. Further climate change action conducted by Kyoto City***

* Kyoto City Council is one of the largest emitters in the city. Hence, the city has put its attention on procurement, and efforts have been made to be more environmentally friendly and carbon neutral. For example, Kyoto City follows national guidelines regarding energy labelling of equipment.
* Further action:
	+ The public transport ran by the council uses hybrid technology
	+ Several community projects are conducted, such as hosting workshops for communities, and providing environmental awareness information through comics (manga).
	+ Businesses and SMEs are encouraged to implement environmental management systems. ISO 14001 is too expensive for SMEs, therefore a KES is recommended as an EMS, which is not too costly and does not represent a big burden for businesses.

***Q9. Benefits or challenges of aligning sustainability and climate change***

Benefits (or drivers)

* The City Mayor is very supportive of climate action and his/her leadership is very important.
* The city council believes that being a decarbonised society is not the ultimate goal but becoming a sustainable society.

Challenges

* The climate change department consults with other departments in the council, including the creation of green jobs. However, the relationship is not that direct or obvious, so in many cases the linkage may not be possible.
* Local budgets are independent from the national government, but in some cases subsidies are requested from the central government.
* At the time of the meeting, the Climate change plan was in a revision process with the goal of having a final draft by November 2020 and start its implementation on April 2021. The next challenge is related to its implementation. The city council will soon start an initial consultation with universities and other experts who may be interested in the co-benefits of the climate action plan measures, in order to facilitate the implementation.

## 3.2 Meeting with the Kamakura City Official

Venue: Kamakura City Administration office

Date: 5th September 2019

Interview id: 2

|  |
| --- |
| Interview questions (semi-structure format)1. Please tell us about the city climate action plans.
2. Please elaborate on the activities undertaken in your city as a part of the climate action and adaption plan and indicate whether anything has changed after the Paris Agreement.
3. Japan is known for promoting voluntary actions by participants. Does the city rely on voluntary participation? How is this monitored?
4. Please give your thoughts on the effectiveness of the actions taken to mitigate the climate change effects and adapt to it. Do you compare the outcomes with other cities in Japan or abroad?
5. Please elaborate the challenges and barriers faced in implementing the climate action plan. How were these challenges addressed? In the UK, budget of city administration is an issue. Is this a constraint here?
6. Please indicate whether the city has defined its Sustainable Development Goals.
7. When considering the climate-related actions, does the Council make any attempt to relate them to the UN Sustainable Development Goals? How?
8. Do you notice any impacts or effects of city’s climate action plans on the local economy or the society? How has the city addressed any adverse impacts? For example, how are they affecting the low-income population?
9. In your opinion are there any benefits of aligning actions on the climate change and sustainability? Why?
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***Q1. City climate change action plans***

* Kamakura has been selected as a Sustainable Future City. The Cabinet Office is strongly focused on the environment in Kamakura.
* For Kamakura, climate change is not actually the real focus. The city cares about environmental protection and green spaces, with a strong focus on waste reduction.

***Q3. Voluntary participation in climate or environmental action***

* Although the waste management is conducted by the administration, citizen participation is strong with focus on social aspects.
* Citizens are very interested in sustainability, in well-being and its social aspects.
* Citizens and businesses tend to consider general and global issues as their own problems. Hence, they are concerned on the conservation of green spaces and forest protection (link to slide 6 – relating to SDG14, SDG15 and SDG17).
* Awareness raising and education. An IT company has been working in the co-creation of ideas with citizens to raising awareness on SDGs.
* Citizen participation and voice is very strong in Kamakura. There are wealthy segments of the population that live in Tokyo and have second homes in Kamakura, such as CEOs or politicians. They are characterised not only having high salaries, but also high levels of education. There is a strong mentality that citizens should do the right things. Hence, the awareness on SDGs is high and they participate in several initiatives. They also realised on the benefits of collaboration.

***Q6. Definition of local Sustainable Development Goals by the city***

* There is a comprehensive plan for SDGs in the city. Although it is difficult to manage by the administration, with the participation of businesses and citizens, the plans become easy to implement.
* There are major past and existing activities related to SDGs. If the initiatives are not aligned with SDGs, they are revisited, or if the interlinkages are not strong, they may not be implemented.
* There is a strong collaboration with citizens and businesses, examples point out to waste reduction and protection of rivers.
* Waste reduction. As previously mentioned, there is a strong focus on waste reduction and a wide application of the 3R (reduce, reuse and recycle). Citizens and businesses are highly aware that recycling puts pressure on the environment, so they attempt to focus on reduce and reuse. Nevertheless,there is a very high recycling rate for several years.

**Q2. Local climate mitigation and adaptation plans**

Mitigation

* Despite transport is a large emitter in the city (see Q5), environmental or air pollution is not considered a problem in the city. Air pollution and emissions are below the national environmental standards. For citizens, the main problem is congestion and the commute time to get from one place to another. Citizens suggest that by reducing traffic, air pollution will also decrease. They mainly care about congestion and commuting time, not about pollution.
* Energy: The main energy source is net biomass. This was previously done in collaboration with Hayama, but an agreement has not reached as citizens opposed, and the initiative was abandoned.
* Energy from waste: There was one incinerator used for less than a year, which closed due to citizen opposition. There is a plan to use one facility in Zushi for Kamakura’s waste. The law prohibits to transfer garbage. In principle, waste should be treated locally. Although the collaboration between Kamakura, Hayama and Zushi should be OK, it is not well accepted in the issue of waste.
* Renewable energy. Currently the rate of local renewable generation is not high. Ten years ago, there were subsidies, so the municipality focused on solar. In the case of wind energy, there are only few small vertical turbines. Kamakura does not have large surface areas to install renewables. Nevertheless, a new factory for the JR train is being constructed close to Kamakura. It is planned to develop a new town and introduce renewables.

Adaptation

* Kamakura and its residents are well prepared for natural disasters, such as tsunamis and earthquakes. For example:
	+ In case of tsunamis, residents are asked to follow escape routes and go to high enough places. If they are in tall buildings, they are asked to look for refuge in these buildings.
	+ In case of earthquakes, “simulations” (like fire drills) are conducted regularly and monitoring how many minutes people take to find safe places.
	+ In both cases, education and awareness raising is very important so citizens can know where they can go and how.
* Conservation and planning. There is a National Trust type of movement, where citizens co-fund and buy areas to preserve land. There is also a similar local movement in Kamakura as part of the conservation efforts. This movement plays a big role in the city. In addition, citizens have also opposed to big residential developments. That is also the reason why Kamakura remains so green.

***Q5. Challenges and barriers for climate or sustainability action***

* Kamakura is a touristic city. However, a big problem is that the local population is decreasing. People only stay on a temporary basis. Local people find difficult to live and work in Kamakura. For example, traffic is very heavy in Kamakura, but the city is not really developed for congestion. The administration attempted to “pricing congestion” in collaboration with the Transport Department, but there were legal barriers and this initiative was stopped.
* One barrier is the Kamakura municipality is very silo oriented. Even if there are trade-offs, the collaboration is not very effective. For example, water or plastic pollution in rivers. The River Division have to deal with floods, but not with environment and waste. Despite that the waste going into the rivers can exacerbate floods, the River Division focus on the protection against flood, but the Environmental Division cannot intervene with the solid waste pollution as they do not deal with the rivers
* Budget and resources for the city are not as high as required. Related to income tax, there are only a few of large companies. Hence the per capita income tax mainly derives from these companies. When requesting funding or subsidies to central government, these are denied as Kamakura is perceived as a rich municipality. For example, in most municipalities, nursery care is free of charge, but Kamakura did not receive this subsidy. They do not have enough resources for all the projects the city council would like to implement.
* There is also the perception that Kamakura is not a large city, so citizens and other stakeholders think that there is not too much they can do for climate change. Although they have signed some environmental declarations, it is felt that they have energy efficient facilities and there is not too much scope to improve. In terms of renewable energy, it is felt that the potential is beyond Kamakura city, and it should be conducted at the regional or national level. What the city can do is improving education on how to reduce energy use and improve energy efficiency at the individual level.

***Q8. Impacts of climate action plans on local environment or society***

* There is a problem of a decreasing population, use of resources and still make the city liveable.
* Looking it from the outside, living in Kamakura city is good because it is green, and it is close to the sea. It is also convenient for commuting to Tokyo. There is also a relation with Mount Fujisan, which is commercially convenient and good for the tourism. Although the city is very green, it is not convenient for the children to play. People who loves Kamakura and stay in the city become very active citizens who try to solve the problems by their own.

***Q9. Benefits of aligning climate action and SDGs***

* The city has a strong focus on SDGs (see Q6). At the start, the city struggled to develop and implement strategies to address SDGs, but they realised that rather than Kamakura attempting to achieve the SDG targets, it was better to use the SDGs to achieve their environmental and social goals.

## 3.3 Interview in Nottingham City Council Official

Venue: Nottingham City Council Office

Date: 29 August 2019 (11.15 – 12.00 hrs)

Interview ID: 3

**Q. What is the city council doing regarding climate action and adaptation?**

* Several projects and measures are described in the Energy Strategy 2010-2020. This strategy will expire next year and there is a target of reducing carbon emissions by 26% by 2020 as well as the energy supply of low carbon energy sources.
* Target on carbon emissions reduction is on track, but the council will exceed the target on reducing per capita emissions by 40%.
* Some of the main projects that the council are focusing on are:
	+ Energy generation through low carbon heat (including district heating based on CHP)
	+ Deployment of smart meters
	+ Tacking fuel poverty (working with different NGOs as well as the Nottingham Housing Associations)
	+ Installation of solar PV in the council’s properties portfolio
	+ Delivery of energy services through ESCOs
	+ **Behaviour change**
	+ Retrofit of Nottingham CC owned houses (90% reductions in new built)
	+ Waste minimisation: Certain percentage of the waste in the city is incinerated and use CHP for district heating)
	+ Low Transport network, including biomass/biogas-based fuels and deployment of electric vehicle charging
	+ Carbon budgets: The city, in collaboration with the Tyndall Centre, have estimated the scopes 1 and 2 emission from the city and established carbon budgets. However, increasingly the council would also like to include the impacts of imported consumption (energy) and try to address them through sustainable procurement
	+ Procurement: looking at supply chains and also energy efficiency (EE) standards and licensing
* Regarding Climate Adaptation, the main climate change impacts that the city has: flooding, heat waves, and also some planning for cold winters.
* Regarding to flooding, there are some issues related to river flooding (from the River Trent), fluvial flooding, but the most important and challenging ones are surface and groundwater flooding. Some of the projects are related to managing water (green & blue infrastructure) (rainwater harvesting and water efficiency). The city also works on SuDS, when these systems are not working properly.
* Regarding heat waves, the main concerns are increased use of cooling and trying to deal with the supply chain disruptions. Nevertheless, dealing with cold winters is also important from the health perspective.

**Q. What is the council doing in terms of SDGs?**

* SDG6 and SDG13 covered.
* Job creation (SDG8 – decent work and economic growth): Within the energy strategy, there is support and investment for the increased of skills and innovation for renewable energy and retrofits through SMEs and housing providers respectively. Nottingham City Council is supporting SMEs conducting innovation projects using Green Funds.
* There are also some projects related to the Energy Hub and the Central Industry Strategy working with partners in the Midlands (for example related to energy storage using LEP funding, heat pumps and district heating). Also working in community energy and smart systems. One of the most important aspects of these projects is the return on investment, so the money can be recycled from previous projects and allow replication. (SDG9 – industry, innovation and infrastructure)
* There are also some initiatives related to the reduce and reuse of waste (circular economy), but the targets still need to be translated to the agenda of the National Waste Strategy to the local level.
* Community projects:
	+ Waste shops: to encourage reuse and recycle
	+ Lunch box and catering: working on the reduction of plastics
	+ Refill initiative with Severn Trent
	+ Local food: reduce food waste, but also food miles
	+ Green Festivals to raise awareness (forthcoming on the 15 September)

**Q. What is next? How are you considering when developing the next climate strategy?**

* The ambition of the city is becoming carbon neutral by 2028
* Main drivers: cost efficiency, fuel poverty reduction and bringing back revenue for further investment.
* How to achieve the carbon targets considering Sustainable Development? Nottingham City council is developing a **co-benefits agenda**.
* Any planning within the council needs to consider and maximise the environmental and social benefits, but at the centre of all is the quality of life and well being of the citizens. However, bringing together agendas is not easy.
* The council is developing a methodology (concepts and principles) on how the SDGs will be integrated (through co-benefits) through the analysis of business cases and business models of carbon neutral projects.
* Some of the main aspects to be considered in this methodology are the interlinkages between different sectors, protect and safeguard quality of life and engagement with people.
* It is expected that this methodology/strategy will be released on Autumn 2019.

**Q. What are the barriers the council have had or the foreseen challenges?**

* Compared to other councils, the budget cuts and other issues have not affected drastically Nottingham City Council. Relevant assets have been retained, such as the public transport, heat network and key properties. Energy supply and services are managed by Robin Hood Energy (owned by the CC, but operated independently) and other companies.
* This is perhaps the first time a city may use this type of approach around the world.
* Some issues are managed at different levels, e.g. city, council, county or national. Need to manage internally.
* Market challenges and changes. One example is when the FiT (feed in tariffs) were drastically reduced and gradually abolished.
* Difficulties to make sustained investments for key infrastructure systems (in terms of capacity, workforce, certainty and consistency). Devise medium-term investment models (8 years) that can repay the investment.
* Challenges also involve knowledge and skills: education (e.g. universities) and also internally (how different groups use different languages)
* Policy and service innovation is required.
* Public: people look to the leadership role of the council. It is important to bring down the messages to the public, to make action earlier and influence behaviour change today.
* The support from partnerships is crucial as there is a big gap between the ambitious targets and the change needed.

## 3.4 Interview with a business participant in Leicester

Method: Email response

Date: 4th September 2019

ID: 4

This interview provides the views of the CEO of a waste management (Zero Plastic) Business in Leicester City. The participant completed the questionnaire in August 2019 and returned the completed form via email.

1. Please elaborate on any activities undertaken in your city as eco-friendly or related to

saving the environment?

I know there are a few initiatives undertaken by local residents in neighbouring area

but not aware of all them. Braunstone gate has an eco-bricking group and a community

orchard which residents are encouraged to use and be part of with the aim of reducing

plastic waste.

There is also ‘perfectly edible’ which saves unwanted food from land fill and gives out

in food parcels to the homeless and pay as you feel days for fruit, veg and bread etc.

2. What type of challenges and barriers were faced in implementing your business? How

were these challenges addressed?

I suppose the biggest challenge was knowing whether Leicester was ready to shop in

such a way. Seeing if the residents of Leicester were happy to support a plastic free

shop and help cut pollution the city.

3. Has your business defined any Sustainable Development Goals? How is your business

linked to these goals, if at all?

I don’t have any goals as such but saving plastic packaging. I have saved well over 24

thousand pieces of single use plastic going to land fill in the year I have opened my business.

4. How effective do you think that your actions (plastic free) are to ease the climate

change effects and adapt to it?

They seem to be effective, customers are really embracing plastic free lives and

enjoying finding new ways of shopping and living.

5. Have you observed any impacts or effects of your business on the society?

It has made local shops and restaurants much more aware and they are wanting to do

more to help reduce their waste and plastic use. I think Leicester (and everywhere

else) is just getting a lot more aware of the problems of climate change and ways to

try and prevent to problem getting worse.

6. How did the city council support your business?

I have had no desire to involve the city council in my business.

## 3.5 Interviews with Leicester City Council officers

Two city council officers were interviewed in September 2019 to record their views about local climate action plans and the links with the SDGs.

## 3.5.1 Leicester City Council: Participant 1

Date: 2nd September 2019

Venue: Telephonic

Transcript

Date: 2/9/2019

Venue: Telephonic

ID: 5

 **So the first one is, is the city aware of the climate change? impacts?**

Yeah, I'd say we've definitely learned something about the council's being involved in climate change sort of actions for quite a long time.

**Can you please elaborate some activities undertaken to create an impact on these climate change?**

Over time, we set a target to reduce carbon emissions for quite a long time ago. Okay. I don't know the exact dates, but I can find them. Since then, we've sort of done a few things. We've got LED lighting replacements in place. You know, we've increased the energy efficiency of some of our buildings. Okay. So district heating, we do have some solar panels on buildings as well. There's lots of different stuff going on. I mean, a lot of the transport work. We've done a lot of cycling lanes and tried to improve classes and stuff. Some of it's not just climate work, but it's called carbon reduction.

**So what are the activities you undertake in climate action plans of the city?**

So I mean, we, currently we have the sustainability action plan. Okay. But that's effectively come to an end now. Okay. So that ran for, I think, three years until the end of last financial year. Okay, we're currently sort of doing the monitoring and our writing up whilst we're developing a new Climate Action Plan.

Because, of course, we declared the climate emergency in February, and essentially said, we'll take the time to come up with a proper action plan. Okay, that sort of goes a bit further, more radical and much broader. At the current moment, we're sort of continuing with a lot of stuff we did on the previous plan. Okay, and coming up with a lot of ideas for the new one.

**So what are the new ones? Actually?**

So the new the previous plan was more broad was more about environment, environmental stuff, World Wildlife biodiversity. But that's more covered in other council plans, such as a biodiversity action plan. Okay, so a lot of that still happens. But our new plan is going to be more specifically on carbon reduction.

So we're looking at ways to reduce energy use in the council and drastically increase electric cars and things. But I can't say, but we will be doing a lot of consultation on it. So it should all be out, sort of next few months, hopefully, what we're planning to do. Okay,

**About the sustainability action plan what you did already, what were the challenges and barriers you faced while doing that?**

That's a harder one to say.

**Any one or two?**

I think in because the council's so large. There is there is definitely an issue with getting everyone working together and getting information. Okay. Sometimes there's stuff going on, we don't know about and it's good. But no one tells us and sometimes stuff we think might be going on, but isn't necessarily. So definitely. Yeah. Coordinating for a big organization. I think that's a problem. Okay, and feel the main one probably funding. Being a council we've had so much of our budget cut over the years. And pretty much all of the cuts have come in Adult Social Care, which is loads of money and child social care. And then the rest of what the council does, that's where all the cuts have been. Okay. So it's made it a lot harder to take radical action than it would otherwise be.

**Did you face any barrier on implementing some projects? any challenges? For example, the LED one or the cycling thing?**

I don't know too much about the individual things out Okay, because we sort of take the role of overseeing the, okay. The links between all of it. So I'm sure we're all have individual programs that are their own their own problems. I mean, I know we have had a few that I wouldn't know about. Okay, that's something which I mean, if it's anything, any further questions you have, and you want to sort of leave on with me, I can ask colleagues as well, if they have any ideas. Okay, because I'm, you know, I've not been, I've been working here for a few years. But So XX, he's been working a lot, lot longer.

**Okay, the challenges you faced in overviewing? What how did you overcome that?**

**How did you address that problem?**

tricky questions?

**How did you try to manage the funds actually?**

**Fight to fund runs?**

That's right.

That's okay.

 **Okay, has the city defined any sustainable development goals?**

So, we, we haven't chosen to focus on the SDGs. I heard him on the university really has. And I think it's probably, again, something that's in all the individual areas. Yeah, people are aware of them. But most of our targets, I would say, aren't sort of specifically mapped to them. So you know, all of the ones for climate sustainability, we, you know, we've set our own targets, and we we base them on other things. So I wouldn't say we're looking at the SDGs directly. Okay.

**How effective Do you think these actions will create an impact on climate change? It's,**

In some ways. So there's a limit as to what the council can do. Because we're relatively, although we're massive, it's also our, our carbon footprint is maybe 3% of the whole city. Oh, God, no significant. But we've we've certainly done well, in reducing our carbon emissions. A lot of it's down to the electricity grid getting leaner, but we we've been able to do quite a lot in other areas, and we've got some big plans to improve our own energy. Yeah. In terms of a wider city. But it's much harder to influence. I think one of the things we're interested in, when we when we come up with a new set of plans, is engaging with the people of less than more. Yeah. To say, you know, everybody's got to do do stuff. We want to help, we want to advise. But yeah, it can be quite tough. Okay.

**Okay, have you observed any negative impacts because of the climate action plans?**

I don't think we have had any major negatives. I mean, I'm sure it was sort of small problems from doing various things, just like that. On the whole. I think if we if we save is going to be major negative impacts, we'd probably do something differently. Because being a council, people tend to be very careful. And okay, they don't like big risks.

**So, if you have a plan, and someone says, oh, it might, he might do bad things that go wrong. I mean, like bringing on bringing on any plan related to climate action affecting some business, or the community of people in some odd way. Like that.**

You might have to ask them. I don't personally think so.

Okay, that's okay. It's just your view and nothing else.

Nothing comes to mind immediately. No, that's good, actually.

**Okay, how are the climate action plans covering all the populations?**

So one of the things we're doing with the new plan is looking at the equality. implications. So, yeah, something where we identified as if we want to look at the city here more than we need, we definitely need to think about how, what we're going to do affect all the different groups and less than, yeah, so we've been working with our person inequalities here to say, Oh, well, you have an example, if we, we banned cars from somewhere. Would there be any negative impacts on people who can't use a bus? Yeah, we can't get on it or something. So, we are we are going to look at that. Because we're qualities is a big thing and recounts, you know, everything gets looked at before it happens. So, you know, we, you know, we just take it very seriously.

Okay, the last one. How do you, is there any benefits aligning these climate actions? With the SDGs? What? That does this project? Yeah. Because we have specific targets in the SDGs. Like focusing on reducing the poverty, zero hunger, well, being and health, clean environment, everything comes under SDGs. Even the economic growth? So these are separate goals in SDGs. Why country map it with the climate action plans? I mean, possibly could but I'm not really sure why the council hasn't gone down that route. I mean, maybe you can suggest them because they are planning the new one right now.

Yeah, I think with the climate, things previously, at least, I think because we started coming up with targets quite a long time ago. I think maybe the the SDGs were sort of they weren't as high profile at the time. So everything we did initially be probably based on other ways of doing things. Okay. And then the SDGs become more important. Caught up, so maybe there could be some big benefits, but then I personally don't.

Okay, this is actually a separate personal question. Yeah. I actually looked on to the SDG plans. And the reason for that 2019 sustainability plan. But I couldn't find the monitoring and overall reviewing thing in the plant, actually, because the other cities when we see to that, like Aberdeen, City of Scotland, those cities have separate column for monitoring and reviewing the Climate Action Plan, what are the activities going on? Everything?

Oh, so if you miss? Yeah, that's where we kept it. In the report, that's about what was with carbon report, which is that roadmap sustainability action plan. So perhaps we don't put the monitoring report online?

That's when I was comparing all the action plans of different cities. Fortunately, our city has various activities going on to create an impact. Because when we compared to other cities, they focus too much on climate change. I mean, the main effects like carbon emission and transport facilities, they don't cause a river and other activities, like taking on the public in account. Education, everything.

So there's the sustainability action report. Okay. So obviously, this is just on the same website. So we have our new versions of all of these are coming, actually. So we've come up with a statement, the overall action plan, and then the past few years of action report. So

Yeah. So I mean, that will, hopefully sometime this year, we'll be putting out the new plan. And I will also at some point later in the year be publishing that this year's version of action report, oh actually takes quite a long time after the end of the financial year. Because some of the figures don't come in till say six months later. And then we have to do all in family.

So this monitoring thing comes under this carbon reports.

Yes. So this is just the page for sustainability action plan and environment and sustainability. So we have last year's sustainability action report. So it's sort of, you know, a few headline figures on the ambitions of writing, and then it sort of goes through each area individually. Just talks about the main actions. Okay. So this is sort of based on a report we do internally. This is a version for breaks down and stuff.

Yeah, yeah, that's that's, I can't quite say when this year, we'll be right on it. When we put this one out. I guess I just thought, keeping a separate column for monitoring and reviewing in the main action plan will help the authorities to keep on track, what are that what is going on?

I think, obviously, I mean, yeah, everything's going to change. And that will bring in a new plan. So I guess, in terms of how we report on the, you know, whatever, we end up with us climate emergency action plan, whatever it's called. We've not really decided how we're going to report on it yet. Because it kind of depends what goes in essentially going to take all of these big measures to the to the people of Leicester and say, do, do you think we should do this? And some of them are probably going to rely on a lot more monitoring than others. But yeah, it's sort of all in the

development stage would be the safest way to say. Yeah, I definitely have a look at this fee sustainability action report.

Okay, that's it. That's one thing else, you

Thank you so much for I mean, if anything else you think a bit more about certain stuff, particularly about how we set up the current I mean, the previous sustainability action plan, let me know because I can ask some of the people in the office Okay, that at least something over because so I wasn't here for the new ones from Yeah, we started in like 2015 slash. I was in the council, but not in that team.

It's okay.

## 3.5.2 Leicester City Council: Participant 2

Date: 2nd September 2019

Venue: Telephonic

Transcript

Date: 2/9/2019

Venue: Telephonic

ID: 6

Date: 02/09/2019

Venue: Telephonic interview

**Is Leicester City aware of the climate change action? climate change?**

Oh, yes. Yes, definitely.

**So what are the activities undertaken to reduce the impacts of climate change?**

Okay. Well, I don't know how much this YY has covered with you. But I mean, just to sort of give you a quick potted history to help understand what we're doing at the moment. So we had we first set a target on climate change in 2006. Yeah. So we set a target for the city and a target for the city council's own by the state and operations. Both targets were to reduce emissions by 50%. By the year 2025. Okay, okay, so, so, and prior to that, we also had strategy, a strategy around energy efficiency. But then in 2006, we moved from just strategy looking at energy efficiency to actually setting targets for climate, climate change specifically. So in terms of kind of implementing that, one point we had sort of separate documents for work to reduce the city's carbon footprint, and then for work to reduce the city council's carbon footprint. So we had what we called the road map for the city, reducing City Council's emissions. And we had a document called the climate change programme of action, which looked at the city-wide position. And then, in 2016, when it came to kind of renewing those documents, then we, we combined the two areas of work into this list, the sustainability action plan. So, so that document covers reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the city and in the city council. And it also covers some of the actions around climate change adaptation as well. So it tried, it sort of brings them all together. I mean, in terms of the kind of the main areas of action are, I suppose probably the easiest to use the headings really in, in the students the same as the action plan. So we've got working with businesses, we've got housing, we've got the council's own,

**but these are the activities of climate action plans.**

Yes, these are the areas of activity, okay, then development in the city, trying to influence that. And then mitigation and adaptation chapter really covers sort of transport as a major one, also waste. And so some of the adaptation issues and biodiversity. And then the people side of it covers the kind of behavior change side of things, and getting people in the city taking action themselves as well. Okay, so you know, with a lot of the city wide work, then there's only so much the council can achieve on its own, it needs the citizens to take action as well. So that's why it's also covered in what we can.

**Do the people and community support for these actions, that development?**

Well, there was a sort of public consultation exercise carried out sort when this was being put together. And there was sort of broadly there was support for that. I mean, there were some, you know, some comments, and I think a few changes were made to the draft version before this was published, but basically, that there was, you know, there was support for it. Yeah, that'shappy to hear.

**Okay, yeah. Did you face any challenges or barriers when you're implementing this plan?**

So one of one of them, I think, is the increasing sort of financial pressures on local authorities, you know, with the, the national government sort of austerity policy, the cake that came in under the coalition government, and has continued since then. So I haven't got the figures in my head, I'm afraid, but there's been a substantial reduction in in the council's budget. Since, you know, kind of 2010 really onwards, year on year, we've had to make cuts. And so that, you know, that reduces our ability to take action. Particularly, I think, it reduces the amount of money we we've got available to spend in on reducing our own operational carbon footprint. So we've, that has affected our strategy a bit. So we've tended to focus quite strongly on actions which can save money as well as bringing greenhouse gas reductions. So an example of that would be with our, our, our own buildings, our own offices and community facilities and so on. Particularly with offices, we have focused on reducing carbon emissions by making more efficient use of our office buildings through a program called kind of rationalization. So we've moved people out of under occupied buildings, into and refurbished buildings to make them more, make it more possible for to use them efficiently. So this building's a good example, where it's quite under occupied at one point. And it's been refurbished parts which have been refurbished to accommodate more people. And then people have been moved out of other buildings into this building, and then other buildings then freed up for use by other organizations. So, so that's, you know, reducing our carbon footprint and saving money at the same time. But it has meant that we've got less money that perhaps we would ideally like to invest. So an example might be a fleet of vehicles, where we would, you know, we would like to be sometimes buying, you know, ultra low emissions vehicles. And we have started to do that. But there are situations where the cost increase of doing that is just a habit of really, so. So I think, yeah, the cut, the sort of budgetary savings is, is sort of an issue.

And sometimes there are kind of legal barriers. Okay, so a couple of examples there would be in terms of housing, we have a very limited ability to influence the energy efficiency of private rented housing. So we can, you know, we can only intervene where how wet private rented housing is substandard, below the kind of national minimum requirements in terms of how, how it's how comfortable and healthy it is to live in. So we can't, we can't sort of require landlords to improve their property above and beyond that. So at the moment, that national level is set at an energy rating of an E. and weak, so we can't require landlords to go above that level, that level of an E rating for housing. And another example would be with new development where we have to implement the National Planning policy framework, which is the National you know, the national policy of central government, so we can't do anything different from that. Yeah, yeah. So and that sets limits on how much we can raise how energy efficient and how carbon. You know how low carbon we can insist that new development is. Okay. So, so there, there would be a couple of examples. Where Yeah, there's a limit to what we can do. Yeah.

**How's the city define the Sustainable Development Goals?**

We're aware of them. But Up to now, we haven't sort of formally written them into our climate change plans. But we are we are aware of them. Yeah.

**How effective Do you think these actions are impact the climate change?**

Well, I think within the kind of context of what a local authority can and can't do, I think they're, they're quite effective. So, to give you an example, where planning applications come in, then we look at all the planning applications for what's called major developments that come into to the council to make sure that they're complying with our climate change policy. Okay. And we do sometimes require improvements if the design isn't good enough. So, you know, for example, if we require that those proposals, as part of it, they have to look at whether it's suitable to have renewable energy as part of it. And if they come back and say, and have no proposals for renewable energy, we will insist that they look at it, okay. And if it's feasible and viable to do it, you know, we would, we would require them to do that. And similarly, we look at things like the amount of daylight in the design so that if a proposal came in, which had lots of rooms without any natural daylight, or with very limited daylight with and there was no justification for that we would require them to redesign the building, potentially, to ensure that each room had daylight so that they're not you wasting electricity, lighting the room lighting rooms unnecessarily So, so. So that area, and I think also another another area, we have made a lot of differences, housing, healthcare, so we have stock of council housing in the city. And over many, many years, we've sort of steadily improved the energy efficiency of the housing. So pretty much all of the housing with cavity walls has had the cavity wall insulation installed. Pretty much all of lofts have been insulated. Almost all of the housing now has condemned, relatively efficient condensing gas boilers for the heating. And some of the some of the housing that has solid walls rather than cavity walls. And a proportion of those think about 2000 of those have had external insulation fitted to improve the energy efficiency. And some properties have also had solar panels. So there's still more that can be done. But, you know, we've sort of made quite a bit of progress on the housing, and probably transport as well, you know, network of cycle routes is been growing year by year, we've increased the amount of cycle, so daily cycling trips, and so on, you know, so yeah, I think I'd argue that it does, it does make a difference.

**Okay, have you observed any negative impacts on bringing on this climate in action plans, negative impacts on maybe communities or any of the stakeholders who get impacted because of climate change?**

That's a tricky one. Really, I suppose. It depends what it depends what how people perceive, what was something that whether Pete some people will perceive a change in their lifestyle as being a negative thing, and other people might see it as a positive thing. So to take transport as an example. You know, the some of the transport schemes have improved facilities for walking and cycling, but have reduced the capacity of the road network. So an example would be on the new work out there where there's they've put the cycle row. Yeah. And they took away one lane of the road to do that. So some people who use that that road in their car might argue that that's been a negative impact for them. Because it's reduced the road capacity, and they might argue it's increased the congestion, or I think probably we would, we might well dispute that. I don't know whether my transport colleagues would, would, would accept it or not. But it's Sometimes there are situations where you, you can't, you know, you can't do one thing without having an indication for another thing. And, you know, people who want to walk in cycle would argue, well, it's improved things for us. So, you know, so that would be an example where probably, you know, some people would argue there's been a negative implications.

**Okay, the next one is the climate action plants, that's covered all the populations of the city.**

So, yes, yeah. When it covers that covers the entire city. And yes, as I say, the chapter on people, yeah, includes, you know, the actions that we're hoping, you know, everyone will do, potentially, and so on some of the mitigation and adaptation chapter does as well. So for the action plan, do concentrate on paid bills. And, yeah, it covers both what the council itself can do, and what the what the what we want the public to do, but, you know, often their schemes where where we're trying to help the public make it make it easier for them. So to give an example, you know, the, on the recycling side of things, you know, there are actions down for us to, to make improvements to the recycling services. So that hopefully more people will recycle, you know,

**Yeah. Okay. In Do you think there are any benefits on aligning these climate action plans with sustainable development goals? Because I think our Climate Action Plan of our city, we didn't do that.**

I can't see any necessarily very big immediate benefits of a lot of aligning in the sense that up to now, I'm not aware of any sort of sources of funding or anything like that, that link through to the Sustainable Development Goals. So that tends to be a big driver for us. Funding as the sole funding is what is one issue? Yeah, I think if, if the funding streams that we rely on for some of our work, particularly some of the transport projects, for example, if they started to require that we aligned with the, with the Sustainable Development Goals, that would, that would be a big, big thing for us. And we would, we would, I mean, I think there's nothing that we're doing, which I think is inconsistent with the, with the with the Sustainable Development Goals, it's more that we haven't explicitly linked to them really, because we are already doing comes under the development goes.

Yeah. Wait, can we map it with that? So we could do that?

I think that goes covers like zero hunger, power and reducing poverty, carbon emission, transport facilities, economic growth, everything. So we covered everything, most of the actions, what we do is related.

Yeah. So I think it's, I think it's more it's really just a case that we haven't seen a strong particular need to. It's nothing to do with not support not being supportive of them. I think it's simply that, you know, we, we haven't seen a strong, strong need to do it. And it doesn't, it doesn't seem as though it's necessarily something that the wider public is clamouring for us to do. But it's something we wouldn't rule out. Doing, I think, but I didn't see.

But there's not really been a particularly strong, strong incentive for us to do it. Yeah, I think that's that's to be honest. The reason? Yeah.

**And the last one, our Climate Action Plan, does it have the monitoring and reviewing thing?**

Yes, so. So in terms of monitoring, then there's kind of high level monitoring. So we, we use figures from central government on citywide carbon footprint to monitor sort of how things are changing. And then we measure our own city council carbon footprint as well. And both of those annual monitoring. So we are, we're doing that kind of high level monitoring. And then we also have monitoring of the implementation of the plan itself. So we have an annual review. And the lead councillor, Councillor X, gets a report each year as to how we're doing on each of the actions, okay. And any, any data that are available on particular actions, you'd get that if it's appropriate, if it's if it's a sort of action where you have kind of figures to show what you've achieved So, yeah, so that there's kind of monitoring at those two levels. Really?

**Yeah. I couldn't find that special. I mean, special column like thing for monitoring the action plan?**

Well, there's, yeah, there's not. There's the way we, in terms of published information, the way we've been doing it is that we've published what's called the sustainability action report. So it doesn't, it doesn't do it doesn't go through each action line by line. But we're because we feel that we want to provide something that is more readable. And it's really quite a specialist thing, not many people would want to sort of examine it line by line. So we tried to publish something that's a bit more shorter and more readable, and just pulls out the highlights. But Councillor X gets a line by line analysis of what's happening. And then, also, then we publish an update. So each year, we update the action plan slightly. So some of the actions if they come, because of the particularly because of the pressure on our finances now, we often can't be certain of the financial budget available to us beyond one year ahead. Because we're not, we're never quite sure what the impact of the government further. So so quite often, what we have in here is, is actions one year ahead. And then each year, when we we update the plan and put another year's worth of action in. So hence we publish an update each year. So that's, that tends to be how it works. And certainly with that our city council is working on a new plan. That's right.

Yeah. So this, this is actually just finished now. And hopefully it is finished.

So it every actions is covered. So all of the actions are, are completed, there are one or two where we weren't able to go quite as far as we, as we thought we were. So the But on the whole, most of them are sort of completed and have achieved, you know, what we what we wanted.

And those One, two is planned to focus in the next plan.

In some cases, I mean, often the one the examples where that's happened tend to be where we thought there was going to be some government grant funding available, and then it didn't materialize. So there was one in particular where we bid for some funding, and then we weren't we weren't successful with the funding bid. But in that case, we will continue. So that was around electric vehicles and charging points for electric vehicles. So we've kind of it's, it's we have continued to work on that. But just slower than we thought we'd be able to, because we haven't had the funding and with we're applying for more funding. And hopefully, it will keep going, you know, and get to the same goal in the end, but we're just a bit slower than we thought when we published it. But yeah, we're, we're working on a new plan that because since this came out, then obviously a lot of councils including ourselves, have declared a climate emergency. Yes. So we're working on new plans at the moment, which will go out for public consultation later this year. And to take it forward with the climate emergency declaration in mind. So we're looking at what how can we take this further? What can we What more can we do? So we reckon that that that consultation will probably be happening. If it goes according to current plans, and it'll be November, December and January, also the three month consultation period. So if you sort of check, check against our if you go go to our website, there'll be some there'll be a press release when consultation launches. So if you kind of if you're still working on this at that time, you know, check on the latest news section on our web website. And if you just sort of put a search in on you know, climate emergency probably or climate change, then it will bring up any press releases or any recent press releases. So we're not sure the exact launch date yet but it'll be around that that time. So we'll be able to see, you know, what kind of overall proposals are and that will be not, it will be proposing a kind of a description of what Lester will need to have less will need to change to become a carbon neutral and it will also create Post what the council strategy should be for getting help and get us there. And so we could that'll be what we'll be consulting on. And then early next year, then a new plan will be published currently as the fund from the central government.

There's no yeah. Yeah. I mean, this is the this is a problem. I think there are some areas where,

because bringing those charges point in the road, it's actually pretty cool idea. So yeah, yeah. Now, I mean, we and travel transport is one area where there is government funding, and we do successfully get it, it's, it's just that, for that particular bid, when we were writing the plan back in 2015, we thought we thought we were going to be successful, but we weren't with a particular bid. But since then, we have been successful with other bids, but it's just meant that it's slowed things down with the charging points in particular. But there are other areas where we would like more government support. def definitely, particularly around the planning side of things. And, you know, areas like housing, and more, more support with so that we can help businesses in the city more. Because if you look at, you know, the breakdown of where emissions come from in the city, then obviously, yeah, housings part of it, transport part of it, but the other part of it is business if, and we do what we can. So we've had, we've currently got European funding, to run programs for small businesses, helping them to install energy efficiency and carbon reduction measures. But we'd like to do more. But that funding is relatively limited. And if we do leave the EU, then then we'll have to find a new source of funding. And so we'd want central government step in at that point, and and can continue that funding and hopefully increase it as well. Because I can add that in the limitations of city council, because yeah, maybe it can set the central government to work on that.

# Appendix 1: Participant information sheet

Research Project: **Integrating the sustainable development goals into climate planning in British and Japanese cities**

Investigators: Prof. Subhes Bhattacharyya (Principal Investigator), Dr. Birgit Painter, Dr. Leticia Ozawa-Meida (De Montfort University)

Dr. Eric Zusman, Ms Ryoko Nakano, Mr. Tetsuro Yoshida, Mr. Matthew Hengesbaugh and Dr. Fernando Orrtiz-Moya (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Japan)

Research students or research staff engaged by the project can also carry out the activities.

Project reference: ES/S013547/1

We invite you to take part in a research activity as part of a research study being undertaken collaboratively by the Institute of Energy and Sustainable Development of De Montfort University and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (Japan). This information sheet provides background information, describes your participation and informs about your rights as a participant. Please read this carefully and feel free to request any clarification or additional information as appropriate.

Background of the research study

Through this social science research collaboration between De Montfort University (UK) and the Institute for Global Energy Strategies (Japan), we are working on the timely theme of making climate planning more sustainable in cities in United Kingdom and Japan. The world is urbanising rapidly and more than 50% of the global population now lives in cities around the world. As the economic output is concentrated in cities, their contribution to climate change is significant and growing rapidly. While many cities have climate action plans and city administrations are seemingly well-positioned to align their climate change plans with other sustainable development concerns, little is known about the sustainability of city climate plans. Relatively little is known about the steps cities are taking to make climate plan sustainable. In fact, whether and to what extent cities are making links between their climate and sustainability objectives remains an open question. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap through a number of distinct activities. We have developed a list of cities that have already produced climate change plan and we are developing screening criteria to help identify the links and gaps between that climate plan and the SDGs. The screening criteria will be used to create a shortlist of cities in both countries to determine the status of integration of Sustainable Development Goals in climate action plans, identify the reasons for weak alignment and find ways of improving the linkage. This scoping exercise would consist of interviews and surveys with a manageable number of cities in both Japan and the United Kingdom.

In the final phase, the research teams in both countries would develop a set of knowledge products and learning materials that would summarise the preliminary results of the networking and then scoping phase.

Participant selection

We are selecting participants who we believe would be able to provide useful insights regarding the climate action plans of cities, their sustainability plans and the challenges they face and could share views about the potential for integration of the sustainable city agenda into climate actions. We have considered participants from city councils (working in the areas of climate change, sustainability, energy issues and long-term planning and development), academics, consultants, NGOs, environmental agencies. Participants are identified through an internet search of city councils, their policy and planning documents, academic publications, and other secondary sources (reports, news articles, etc.). References from participants through snowballing approach have also been followed.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have no obligation to participate in this study. You may decide not to answer any of the questions if you wish. You may also decide to withdraw from this study at any time by advising the researcher interviewing you or by emailing subhesb@dmu.ac.uk or using the contact detail at the end of this document. If you notify us of your withdrawal, all identifiable data will be destroyed. Once data has been anonymised it will be impossible to identify the origin and cannot be destroyed.

We may ask for clarification of issues raised through your participation and we may contact you subsequently, but you will not be obliged in any way to clarify or participate further.

Your involvement

We are requesting your participation in this research through a semi-structured interview of approximately 30 minutes in length to take place by arrangement. We will initially contact you by email or telephone. If interview is not feasible for any reason, we can send the questions by email or using a web-based application or by post for your participation.

Rights and confidentiality

The information you provide is confidential, except that with your permission anonymised quotes may be used. If you request confidentiality, beyond anonymised quotes, information you provide will be treated only as a source of background information, alongside literature-based research and interviews with others.

Your name or any other personal identifying information will not appear in any publications resulting from this study; neither will there be anything to identify your place of work.

The information gained from this interview will only be used for the above objectives, will not be used for any other purpose and will not be recorded in excess of what is required for the research. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, your data and personal details will not be shared with third parties.

Even though the study findings will be published in international conferences and journals, only the research team will have access to the interview data itself. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

Complaints procedure

In the unlikely event of any complaint or any issue that cannot be addressed by the researcher, please feel free to approach the Principal Investigator of the study for resolution of your issue. You can contact Professor Subhes Bhattacharyya via email (subhesb@dmu.ac.uk).

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information please ask the researcher before, during, or after the interview or contact subhesb@dmu.ac.uk