

Your Voice has Power: Talking to your local politicians about climate change and nature



@hopeforthefuture_uk



@HopeFTFuture



info@hftf.org.uk



@Hope4TFuture

Hope for the Future (HFTF)

Your trainers

Laura D'Henin- Ivers
(she/her)
HFTF Co-Director



Annie Pickering she/her
Climate Emergency UK
Co-Director



laura.dhenin@hftf.org.uk



annie@climateemergency.uk

Hope for the Future

Who we are and what we do

- With **10 years of experience**, HFTF upskills people across the UK and empowers them to **engage their local politicians on the urgency of climate change**.
- **We offer a range of support to help people achieve positive climate action**, including training, 1:1 tailored support, events and more.
- Find out more about HFTF and our work by scanning the QR! Or by visiting our website at **www.hftf.org.uk**

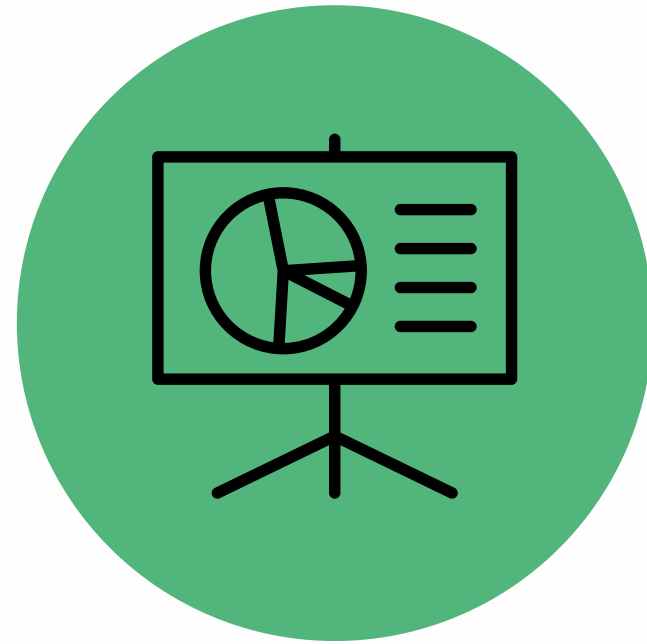
SCAN ME



Housekeeping



Please **respect**
each other



We will **share a copy**
of the slides and
research!



Questions are
welcomed
throughout



Please tell us how
we did in the
feedback form

Session outline

- 1 Intro
- 2 Our relationship-based approach
- 3 Understanding our Council
- 4 Finding common ground
- 5 **Climate Action Scorecards - Wirral Borough Council**
- 6 Activity - developing a concrete ask
- 7 What's next?



What action on the climate emergency would you like to see in your area?



Some ideas could include housing, food or energy policies!



Why you should talk to your local politician about climate change

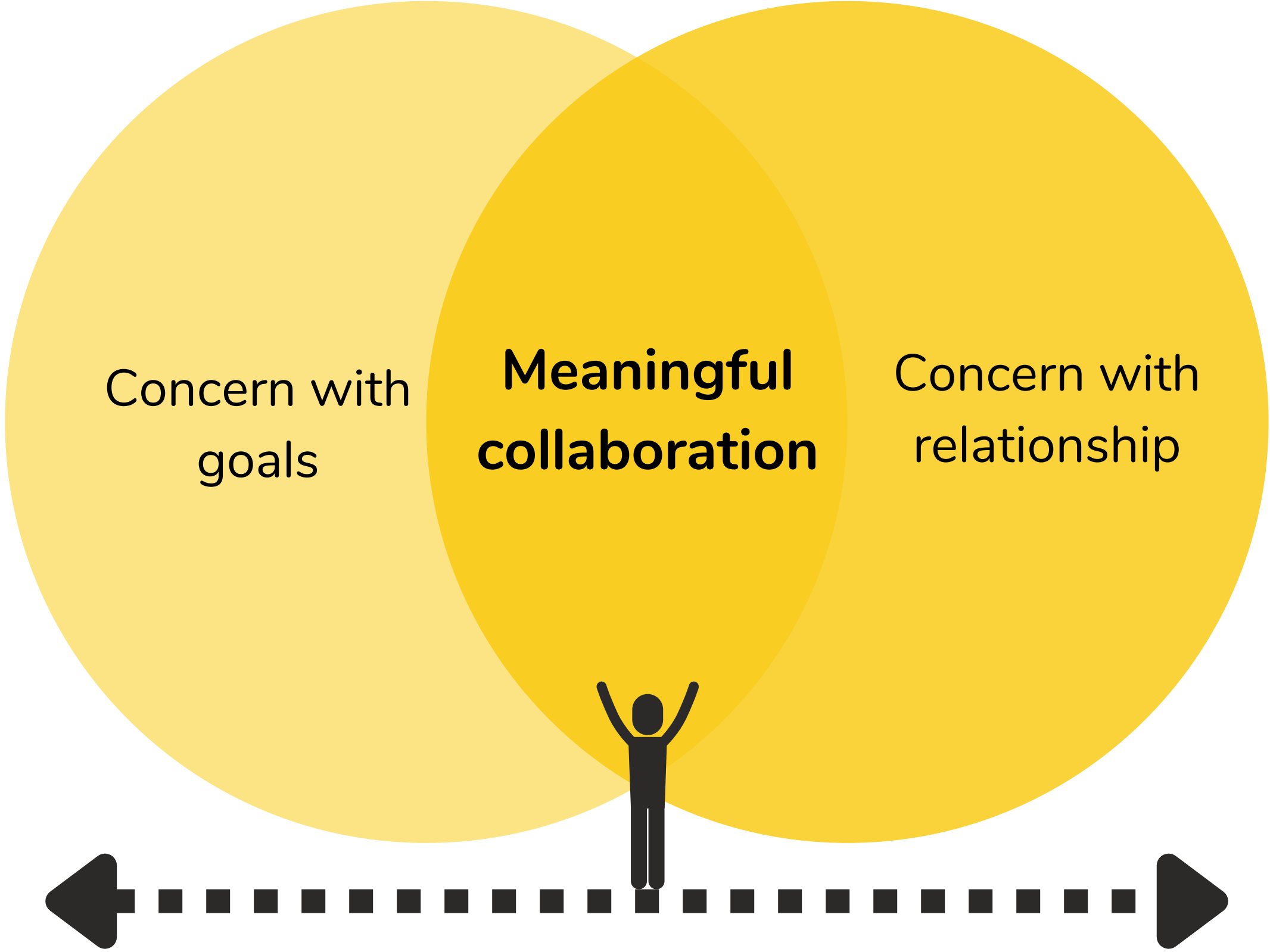
- Meeting your local politician about climate change issues strengthens their **mandate to act**
- Meeting with them in person can help you to **build a relationship** and can therefore make it easier to **influence them to take action** on climate change.





Our relationship-based approach

What do we mean by relationship building?



Politician's defensive behaviours

- Holding the party line
- Controlling the conversation
- Inattention
- Refusing concrete answers
- Overcommitting to promises

To avoid conversation breakdown...

Try not to...

- Show irritation
- Control the conversation
- Dwell on knowledge gaps
- Refuse to move on from controversial issues
- Attack a political party

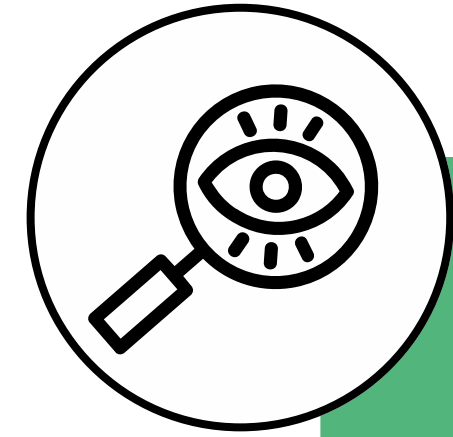
Avoid making demands and accusations

“

"Your lack of action on the cost of energy is shameful and shows you don't care about residents. We demand that you do more to make energy costs affordable.

local emissions

Instead focus on positive solutions



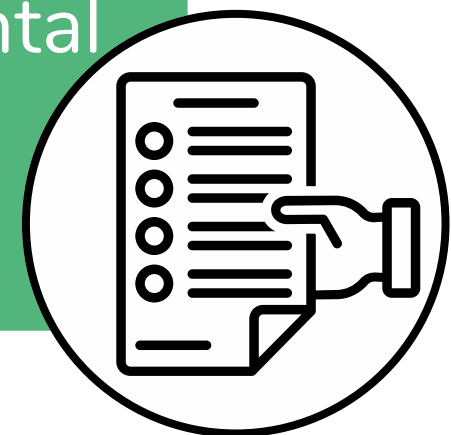
1) Observation: The cost of energy remains high, with gas being 60% more expensive than 2 years ago, and electricity 40% more expensive.



2) Feelings: I am concerned about the ability of myself and neighbours to afford to heat their homes this winter, as well as the environmental impact of heating.



3) Needs/Values: It is vital that people can afford to heat their homes, but also that we limit the environmental impact of staying warm.



4) Request: Will you take action to support insulation upgrades, decreasing the financial burden and environmental impact of heating homes?



Understanding
our audience

 **WIRRAL**

Know your audience

- Local politicians have **interests, passions, and motivations.**
- Understand them to get them on side - **Stand out!**
- Reduce defensive behaviours by understanding them as people, how might they react to certain topics and approaches?

What is a Councillor?

- ▶ Councillors provide a bridge between a community and a council
- ▶ They investigate and respond to queries and concerns from local people, whilst balancing demands from the council and their political party
- ▶ **Contact your councillor about local issues** such as transport, planning, recycling and education

Being a local politician



- Often a **high profile job** with heavy **time constraints**
- Broad knowledge but **often lacking detail**
- Limits as a local elected representative **tackling global issues**
- Councillors' **allowances don't usually replace a wage**
- Being constrained by their **political party policy and agenda (party line)**

Local Councillors: Example profiles

Local Councillor 1

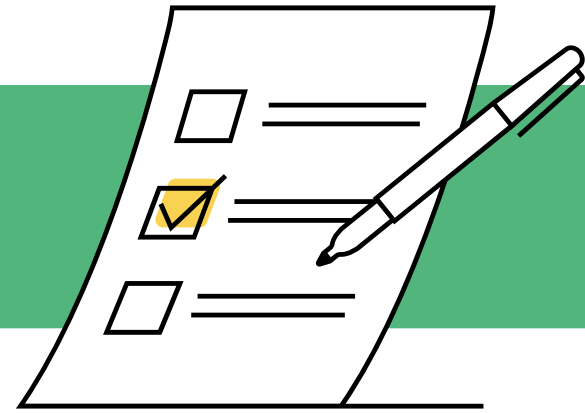
- Works full time at local community centre
- Persuaded to stand for council after doing some local political campaigning
- New councillor, elected for the first time last year
- Member of the councils planning committee
- Has previously spoken publicly about their support for implementing school streets

Local Councillor 2

- Retired, worked in construction locally
- Councillor at both District and County level
- Has been a councillor for 15 years
- Has been portfolio holder for housing for past 5 years, seen as one of the more senior councillors
- Has been vocally critical of climate protests by Extinction Rebellion and Insulate Britain

- Metropolitan District Council (provides all local services)
- 66 councillors across 22 wards, 4 year terms
 - Labour – 29 seats
 - Conservative – 17 seats
 - The Green Party – 14 seats
 - Liberal Democrats – 6 seats
- Council Leader:
- Committee system (31)
 - Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee
Chair: Councillor Elizabeth Grey
 - Planning Committee
Chair: Councillor Stuart Kelly

Declared a climate emergency on July 15 2019 - “achieve ‘net zero’ carbon emissions associated with [their] activities by 2030”



Local, regional and national government



Regional authority



Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Single tier council



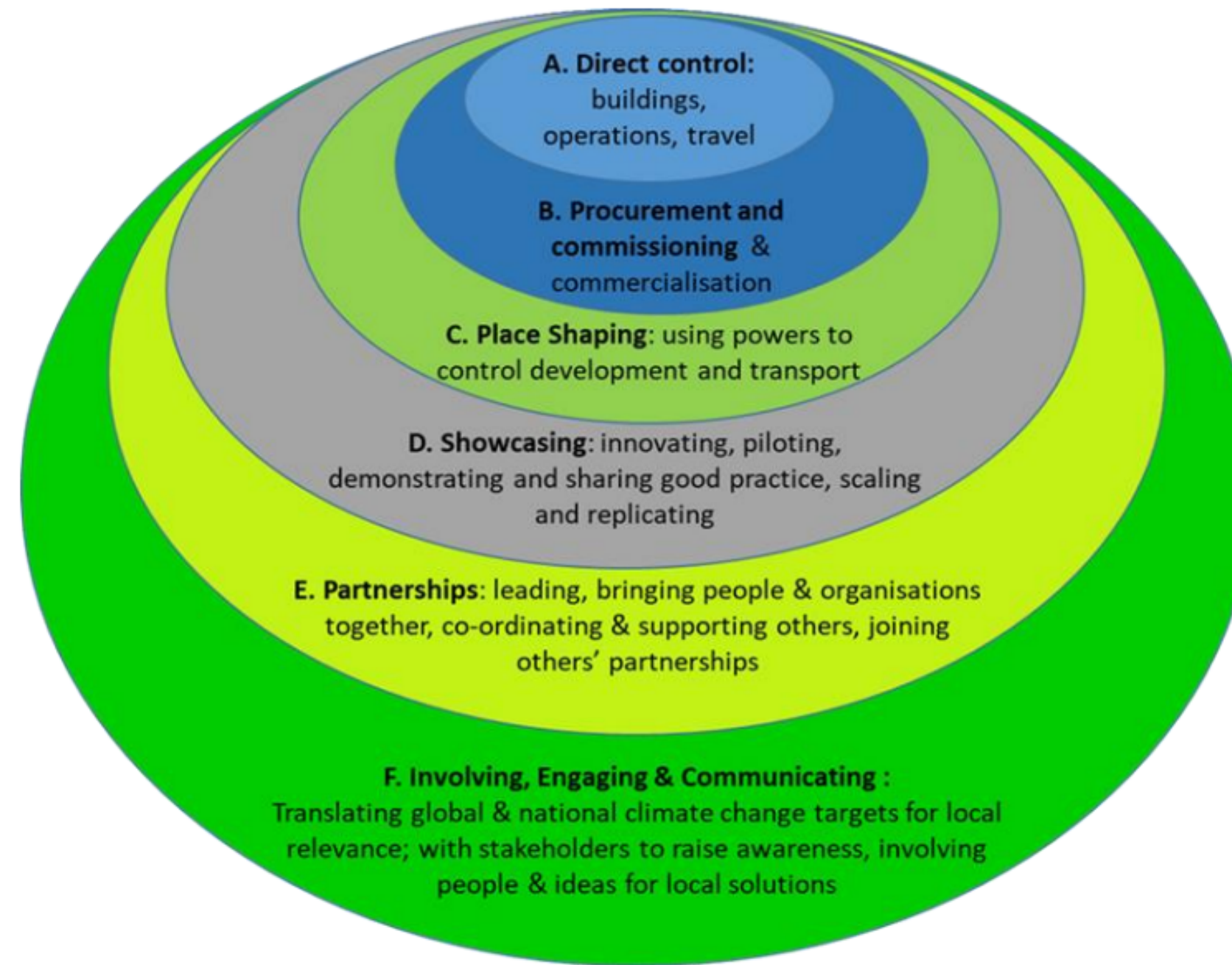
Wirral Borough Council

The Wirral area elects 4 MPs to represent their constituents in parliament, the biggest party forming the government



Birkenhead- Mick Whitley MP
Wallasey- Angela Eagle MP
Wirral South – Alison McGovern MP
Wirral West - Margaret Greenwood MP

Figure 1.2 How local authorities control and influence emissions



Source: Coxcoon, R. & Roberts, S. (2020) *Climate Action Planning Tool for Local Authorities*, Centre for Sustainable Energy. <https://www.cse.org.uk/news/view/2541>



Daily Mail

Why your local

Across England, local cou...

Sheffield Council has suffered 27 per cent cut in government funding, says campaign

A council campaigning group says that Sheffield Council has seen a 27 per cent cut in government funding over the past 13 years, in line with what has been lost by the poorest 10 per cent of councils.

going bust

Local government faces unprecedented financial challenges

Four in 10 councils at risk of going bust next five years

Britain's local authority funding crisis deepens as social care costs spike

Melissa Lawford
14 January 2024 • 4:34pm



Menu Weekly edition The world in brief Search

Britain | Local government crisis

Why more English councils will go bust

ry Clarke-Ezzidio

Council bankruptcy tracker: authorities under increasing financial strain

Six local authorities have declared bankruptcy since 2021. Spotlight looks at the financial situation at English councils.

Regional Development | 25 January 2024



**CLIMATE
EMERGENCY
UK**

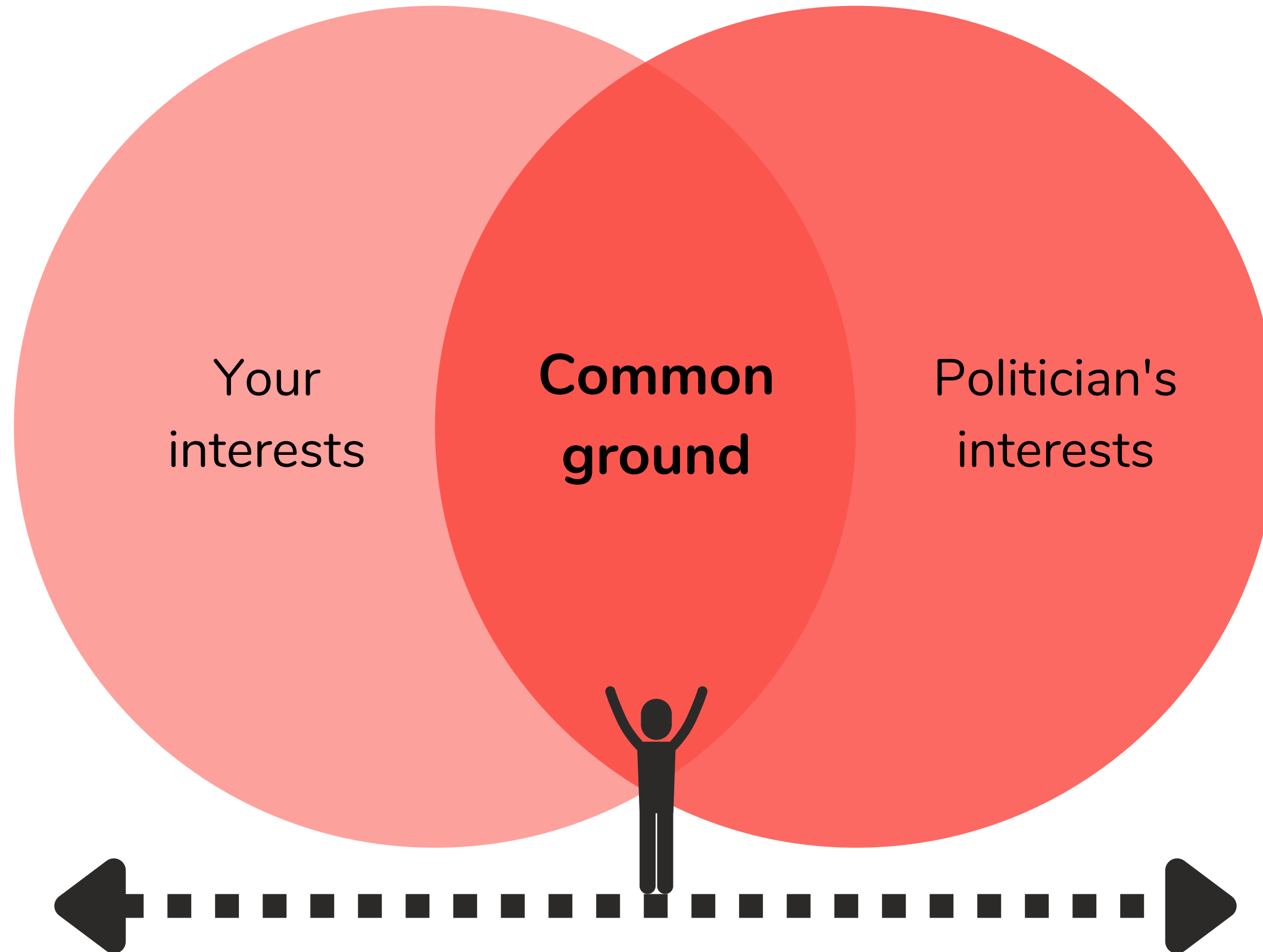


Annie Pickering she/her
Climate Emergency UK
Co-Director



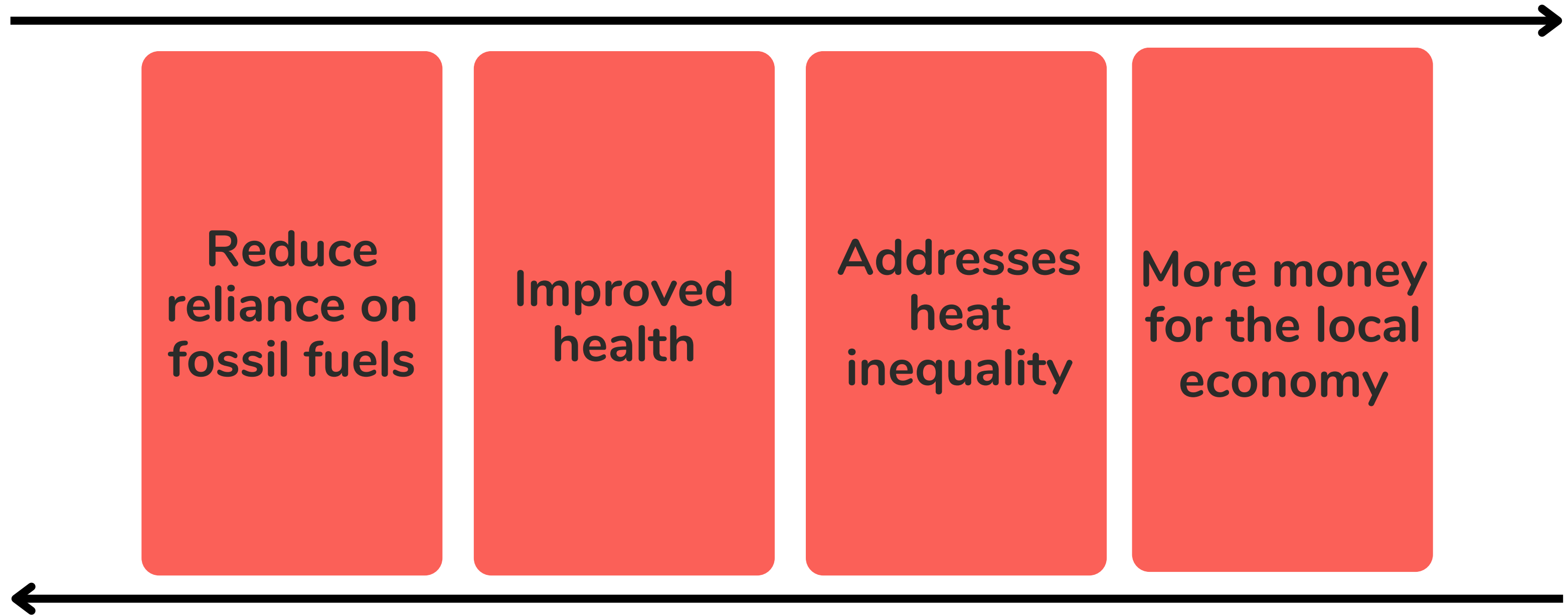
Finding common
ground

Finding Common Ground



Co-benefits of topics example:

Home Insulation



HFTF Case Study: Alex Chalk MP



‘Being able to engage with MPs is essential for a healthy democracy—never more so than when it comes to the existential issue of climate change. Hope for the Future do a good job of bringing people and their MPs together and I found my experience of working with them really worthwhile.’

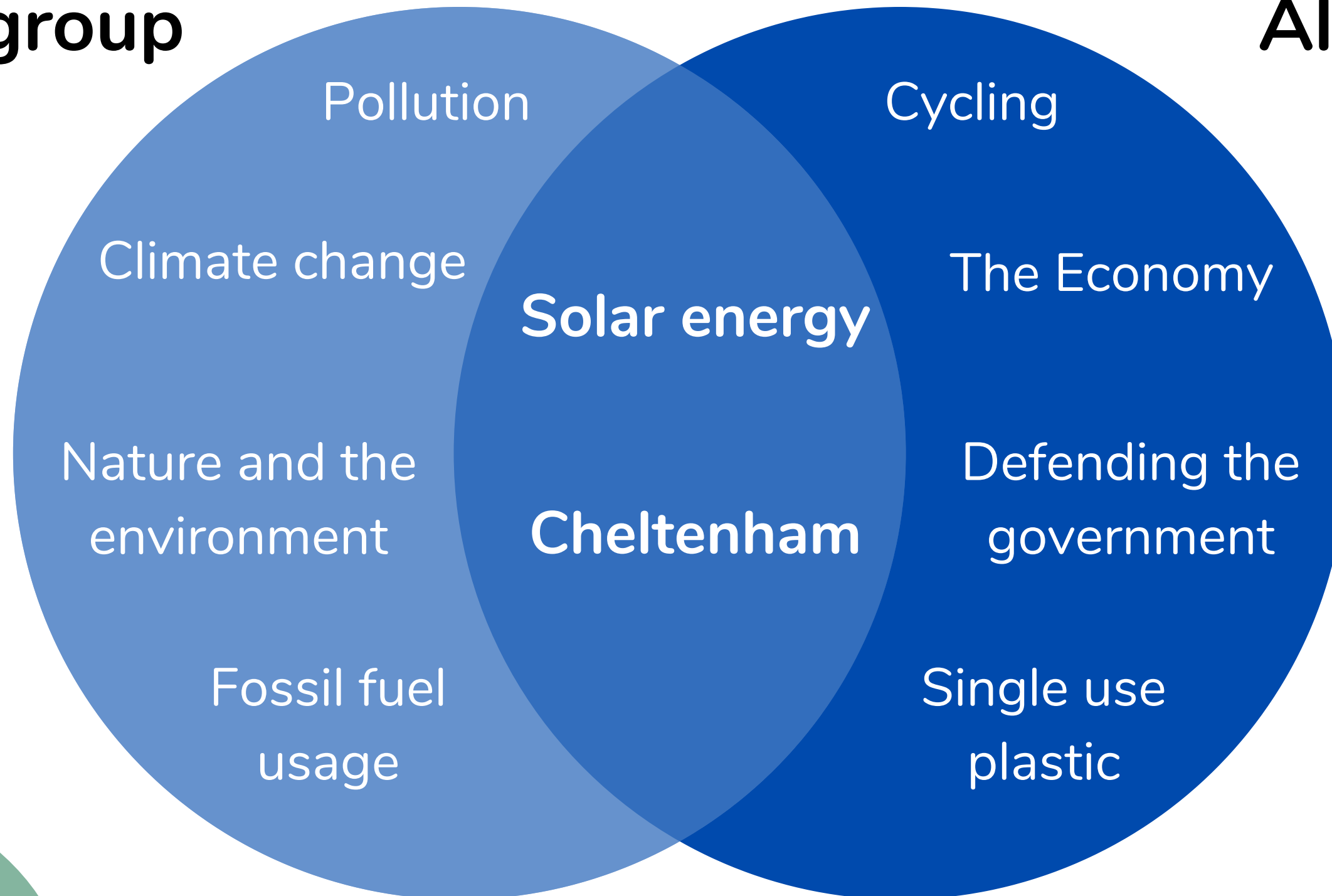
Alex Chalk, Conservative MP for Cheltenham, August 2019



Finding common ground: with Alex Chalk

Cheltenham group

Alex Chalk MP



Finding common ground

Local MPs

Mick Whitley MP
Birkenhead



Angela Eagle MP
Wallasey



Margaret Greenwood MP
Wirral West



Alison McGovern MP
Wirral South



Finding your candidates

www.localintelligencehub.com



SEARCH MAP SIGN IN

Local Intelligence Hub

Your starting point for data about local MPs, constituencies, public opinion and the climate and nature movement.

Search by constituency name, MP name, or postcode

[Use my current location](#)

Explore data across the UK

Use data from The Climate Coalition, its member organisations, and the wider sector, to narrow down your focus to the areas and constituencies that matter to you.

Use the interactive map to discover data about your area, then export as a spreadsheet for further analysis.

[Start exploring](#)



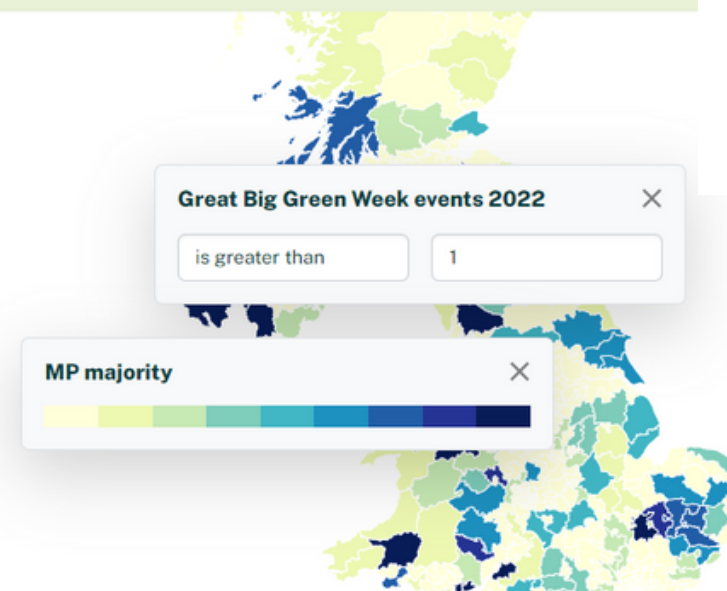
Who Can I Vote For?

[Browse the list of people and parties standing in the next general election.](#)

UK Prospective Parliamentary Candidates

Democracy Club's volunteers are collecting information on each candidate as they are announced. The live table below displays all the candidates we are aware of. Where a candidate has a recent electoral history, this is displayed on their Democracy Club profile, linked to from their name.

<https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/ppcs/details/>



SMART asks



SMART Asks

Specific

S



Measureable

M



Achievable

A



Relevant

R



Timed

T



Not SMART

“

Will you do more to
tackle air quality locally?

”

SMART Ask

Will you take a motion to a full council meeting this term, outlining the key barriers to shifting more journeys to sustainable transport options and committing the council to a programme in partnership with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to encourage more people in our area to travel on foot, by bike, bus or rail?

“

'Members of the public turning up and asking questions at council meetings, that really makes members sit up and pay attention. Because there's too many committee meetings that happen, and although the public know, you can safely assume that there isn't actually anybody listening in'

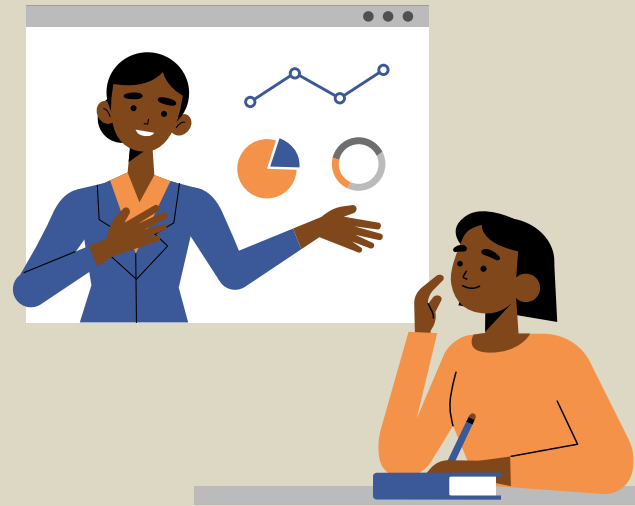
Green Party County Councillor

Motivating local politicians

Providing a
constituency
mandate



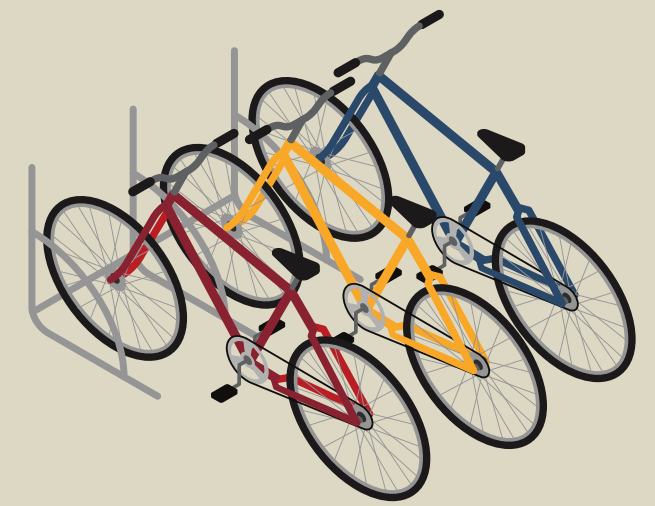
Improved
knowledge
and
understanding



Good publicity



Leaving a legacy
of public service



SMART asks



Over to you!

Types of SMART Asks (for councillors)

Backbench / all Councillors

Ask a written or oral question

Visit an area in their ward that has a problem or a positive project we need more of!

Read a briefing

Take a motion to full council

Raise an issue in a speech at a committee or full council

Cabinet member / leader

Attending an event

Speak or write to the relevant minister asking for funding /powers

Advocate for funding / policy change in support of your aims with the LCRCA

Ask that the council bid for funding streams in ways that support campaign objectives

Opposition group leaders

Write a letter to the local press in support of your campaign

Raise an issue with governing group leader or cabinet member

Adopt your campaign aims as part of their group policy

Advocate for inclusion of your issue in the council plan

Types of SMART Asks (for MPs)

Backbench MPs

Ask a written or oral question

Submit for debates

Speak or write to the relevant minister

Read a briefing

Join a parliamentary grouping

Speak or write to the relevant minister

Minister or PPS

Focus on Ministerial portfolio

Avoid conflict with party /current gov policy

Attending an event

Raise an issue in speech

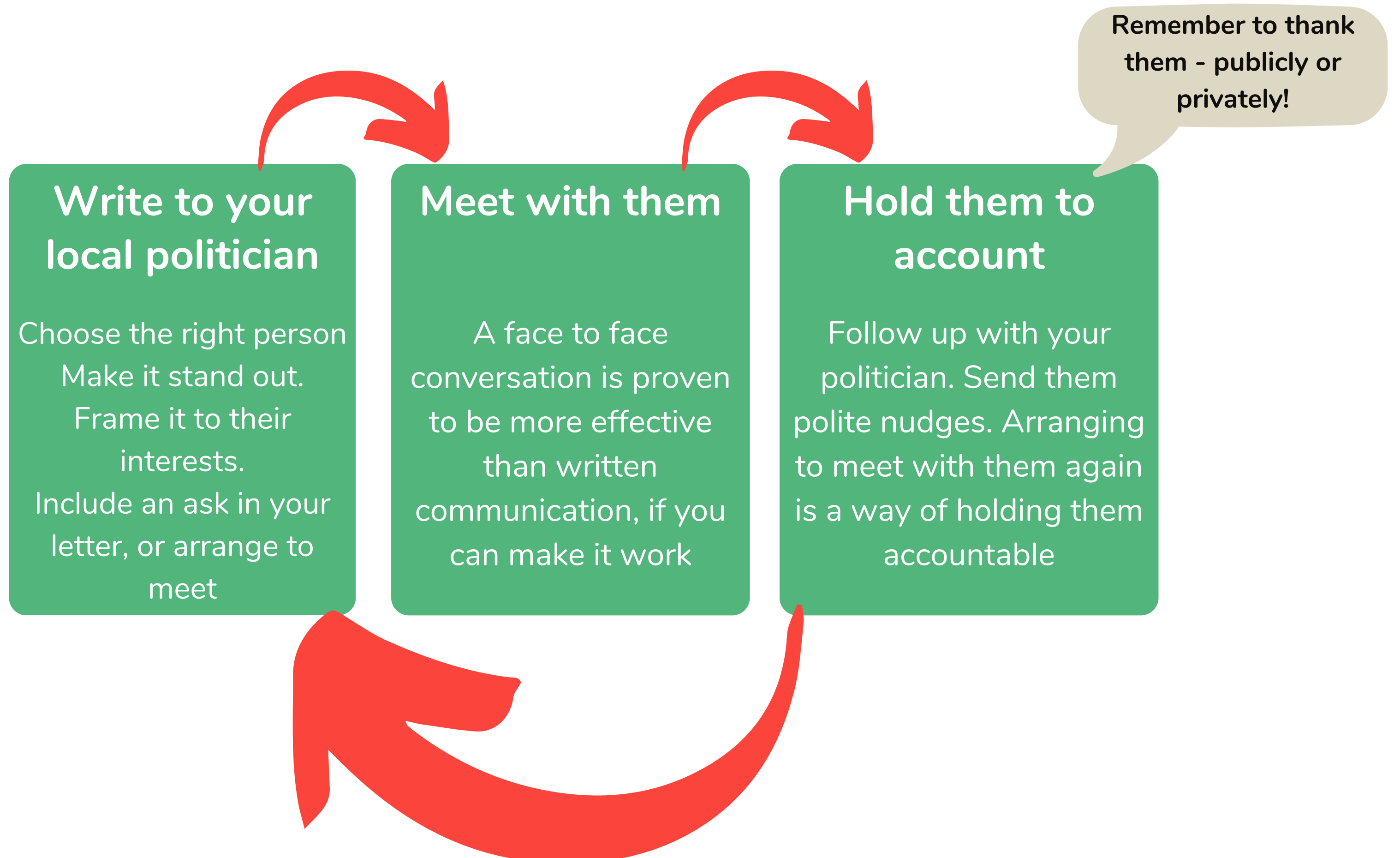
Shadow Minister or Shadow PPS

Make a proposal official party policy

Raise an issue with gov counterpart

Write a formal letter to a minister/ask a question

What now?





Next steps

Join our new online portal!



As a Hope for the Future constituent you can join our online community where you'll find resources, training, and further support. Our community is part of The Climate Village, a community of action where everyone is welcome.

Activate your free membership now or read on to find out more about the Climate Village.

[Join the community](#)

[Return to Hope For the Future](#)

We welcome your feedback!

Registered charity number: 1173547



info@hftf.org.uk



[@hopeforthefuture_uk](https://www.instagram.com/hopeforthefuture_uk)



[@Hope4TFuture](https://www.facebook.com/Hope4TFuture)



[@HopeFTFuture](https://twitter.com/HopeFTFuture)

