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# **Living and Sustainability: An Environmental Critique of Design and Building Practices, Locally and Globally**

**Keynote Speaker. Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February: Paul Allen**

**Project Coordinator, Zero Carbon Britain, Centre for Alternative Technology.**

## **Zero Carbon Britain – Rethinking the Future**

Climate and energy policy must reflect what our science is telling us. Article 4 of the 2015 Paris Agreement states that humanity must reach “net-zero emissions in the second half of the century”. This is a big shift, and we have no option other than to succeed if we want a good chance of avoiding really dangerous climate change. All across the globe, literally millions of projects, from household changes to city-wide initiatives, are responding - but the timeline for success is tight. To counter-balance the serious nature of this challenge, it is vital we focus on positive visions, both locally and nationally.

Our hesitation to believe that the required shift is possible is, in itself, one of the key barriers to achieving it. Providing clear evidence that workable solutions already exist empowers citizens, and gives hesitant politicians no place to hide. The Centre for Alternative Technology’s Zero Carbon Britain (ZCB) project was created to offer the hard data and confidence required for visualising a future where we have risen to the demands of the climate science; to remove fear and misunderstandings and open new positive, solutions-focused conversations.

In the built-environment, there needs to be a significant reduction in energy use coupled with an increase in installed renewable capacity for electricity and heat. New houses need to be built to zero-carbon standard and use low-carbon materials for construction, while existing buildings need to be retrofitted to significantly reduce energy demand. All of these changes can result in significant social, economic and environmental benefits including reduced obesity, improved health, better air quality and increased employment.

In addition, to help other countries access such positive scenarios, our Who’s Getting Ready for Zero report maps over 100 peer-reviewed research studies, plans and practical on-the-ground projects from across the globe, all showing paths towards zero emissions.

This transition should not be seen as burdensome or a return to the past, but as one of the most exciting opportunities in human history.

<http://zerocarbonbritain.com/en/>