



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth
and Climate Change

**Department for Business, Energy &
Industrial Strategy**
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Councilor James Mallinder
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24 January 2022

Dear Cllr Mallinder,

Thank you for your letter dated 14 October, to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), regarding the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill. Your letter has been passed to this Department and I am replying as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio. I sincerely apologise for the delay in response, your email has only recently been brought to my attention.

The UK already has a world-leading legislative framework in place, the Climate Change Act 2008, to mitigate climate change and ensure that the government works towards meeting its net zero emissions target by 2050. The combination of our innovative system of carbon budgets, oversight afforded by the Climate Change Committee and ambitious policy action has seen the UK achieve record clean growth in the last three decades, with our economy growing by 78% and our emissions decreasing by 44%. This is the fastest rate in the G7. To oversee progress, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) is well established as an independent, statutory body to provide expert advice to government on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Building on the Prime Minister's landmark Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, our Net Zero Strategy will drive forward our ambition to reach net zero and level up the UK by supporting up to 190,000 jobs in the middle of the 2020s and up to 440,000 jobs in 2030. It is a cross-economy strategy which keeps us on our path to net zero, including the action we will take to keep us on track for meeting carbon budgets and our 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions. The measures we are taking will also build on our ongoing work to protect, support and create employment, generating millions of quality green jobs across the country.

In the past year, in addition to the Ten Point Plan, we have published the Energy White Paper, the North Sea Transition Deal, the Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, the Hydrogen Strategy and most recently, our Heat and Buildings Strategy. The government has also just unveiled a landmark commitment to decarbonise the UK's electricity system by 2035 to help us build a secure, home-grown energy sector that is less reliant on fossil fuels and less exposed to volatile global wholesale energy prices.

We recognise that the climate and biodiversity crises are inextricably linked. There is no pathway to tackling climate change that does not involve protecting and conserving nature on a massive scale. Nature-based solutions, for example tree planting and peat restoration, can deliver multiple benefits for climate, biodiversity, and people, and can therefore play a critical role in tackling these interrelated crises in an integrated way. We are restoring at least 35,000 hectares of peatlands in England by 2025, through the Nature for Climate

Fund, and we aim to restore approximately 280,000 hectares of peat in England by 2050, including via funding from the new environmental land management schemes. We will also boost the existing £640 million Nature for Climate Fund with a further £124 million of new money, ensuring total spend of more than £750 million by 2025 on peat restoration, woodland creation and management.

The government also recognises that local authorities can, and do, play an essential role in driving local climate action, with significant influence in many of the national priorities across energy, housing, and transport, which will be needed to achieve net zero. The government has committed to continuing the Local Net Zero Programme to support all local areas with their capability and capacity to meet net zero. This includes provisions to continue the Local Net Zero Hubs (previously known as the local energy hubs) to support all areas of England to reach net zero, including those lacking capacity and capability, or those facing unique challenges.

Thank you again for writing on this important matter. I am grateful to East Suffolk Council for the action they are taking to support our climate goals.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Hands', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

THE RT HON GREG HANDS MP

Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change