



Department
for Education

Peter Bungard
Chief Executive
Gloucestershire County Council
Shire Hall
Westgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 2TG



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Chris Skidmore MP
Minister for Energy and Clean Growth

1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

+44 (0) 20 7215 5000
www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus
enquiries@beis.gov.uk
www.gov.uk

Our ref: MCB2019/10572

19 June 2019

Dear Peter,

Thank you so much for your letter dated 23 May, addressed to the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, providing an update on Gloucestershire County Council's commitment to tackle climate change, which I note and welcome. I am replying as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

There is no doubt that climate change is one of the most profound global challenges we face. The decisions we make today will affect the future of our planet for generations to come, and the Government fully recognises that action is urgently needed in the UK and across the world. We must, however, look to the challenge ahead with hope rather than fear. We should be proud of the UK's leadership in tackling climate change and the real progress we have made in reducing our emissions whilst driving cleaner economic growth.


Our achievements should be celebrated, not to imply that we are complacent, but to demonstrate that with ambitious policy within the UK and concerted international action, solving the challenge of climate change is possible.

Our Climate Change Act 2008 was the first of its kind in the world and set a legally binding target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 relative to 1990 levels. We are already making strong progress towards that target. Between 1990 and 2017, the UK reduced its emissions by over 40% while growing the economy by more than two-thirds – On the latest available data across countries to 2016, this is the best performance in the G7 on a per person basis. We do, however, recognise the need to go further and the Clean Growth Strategy sets out our plans to build on our progress in decarbonising the power sector, while looking further across the whole of the economy and the country through to 2032. It includes ambitious proposals on housing, business, transport, the natural environment and green finance. More details about the Clean Growth Strategy can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy.

The Government is convinced of the need for urgent action on climate change which is why we asked our independent climate experts, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), for advice last October on the implications of the Paris Agreement for the UK's long-term emissions reduction targets, including on setting a net zero target. The CCC published its advice to the Government on 2 May, recommending that the UK legislates for a net zero target. On 12 June, the Government laid draft legislation to set a new net zero greenhouse gas emissions target for the UK, to be delivered by 2050. This world-leading target will bring to an end the UK's contribution to climate change.

Regarding your point about 'the Government giving powers and resources to local governments' as this is a matter for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) I would advise you to contact them directly. They can be contacted via; online contact form: forms.communities.gov.uk/, telephone: 030 3444 0000 or by post to the following address: 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write, I really hope you find this information helpful.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Chris Skidmore", with a horizontal line underneath it.

CHRIS SKIDMORE MP

TEN CLIMATE ACTIONS TO CELEBRATE

1. The UK passed the world's first Climate Change Act over a decade ago with cross-party support. This gave us both a framework to set statutory carbon budgets and set up the independent Committee on Climate Change.
2. Since 2000, independent analysis shows that no other major industrialised country has done more than the UK to cut CO₂ intensity (the measure of carbon for each pound of GDP). We have seen reductions of an average of 3.7 per cent a year, compared to the EU average of 2.3 per cent and a G7 average of 2.2 per cent. The last time emissions in the UK were this low was in 1888 when Queen Victoria was on the throne, and our progress is accelerating; between 2010 and 2018, we reduced UK greenhouse gas emissions by approximately a quarter overall.
3. Ending coal use in our electricity generation through a huge shift to renewables and gas driven by decisive policy action: a UK carbon floor price (in addition to the European ETS). We have seen coal use on the grid tumble from almost 40 per cent in 2012 to our first "coal free" generation day last April and our first coal-free week since the Industrial Revolution in May 2019. By 2025 the UK will have no coal powered electricity generation.
4. We've used this achievement to establish the global Powering Past Coal Alliance with Canada – a coalition of 80 national and sub-national governments, businesses and organizations committed to phasing out unabated coal generation by no later than 2030.
5. Renewable electricity generation has quadrupled since 2010 and clean electricity now gives us over 50 per cent of our total.
6. Our renewables mix is diverse but we are rapidly developing the incredible potential for offshore wind around our coastlines, with the world's largest offshore wind capacity (8GW) and a launch last month of new £250 million sector deal to provide at least 30 per cent of our electricity from offshore wind by 2030 (and a requirement that at least 60 per cent of the supply chain is UK sourced by 2030).
7. The low carbon sector and its supply chain is now providing almost 400,000 green collar jobs in the UK (more than aerospace) and is growing much faster than the main economy – with estimated potential exports of more than £60 billion by 2030.
8. The government is investing more than £2.5 billion in low carbon technology over this parliament – the largest ever public R&D investment in clean growth.
9. We want to go further and faster and the UK was the first major industrial economy to ask for independent advice (from the Committee on Climate Change) on how to reach a Net Zero economy after the publication of the IPCC report last year.
10. We have consistently been in the vanguard of international action, helping to lead the Paris 2015 Climate conference, delivering £6 billion in International Climate Finance over this Parliament and bidding to host the crucial 2020 UN climate negotiations here in the UK.

