



Department for
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Jacqueline Wheeler
The Steering Group of Architects Declares
Architects Climate Action network
London Energy Transformation Initiative

Our ref: MCB2020/23923/NB

3 August 2020

Dear Jacqueline,

Thank you for your letter of 8 July, to the Prime Minister, regarding support for a green recovery. Your letter has been passed to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and I am replying as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

I am grateful to you for raising this important matter, and I welcome the support of the organisations you represent as we recover from COVID-19. In June 2019, following advice from the Committee on Climate Change, the UK Government set a legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from across the UK economy by 2050. In doing so, the UK became the first major economy to legislate for a net zero target. This will bring an end to the UK's contribution to climate change. Our independent advisors – the Committee on Climate Change – made clear in their Net Zero report, published in May 2019, that they do not currently consider it credible for the UK to aim to reach net zero emissions earlier than 2050. We have considered their advice and have set our net zero target accordingly.

The UK has shown that growing our economy and cutting emissions can be achieved at the same time. We have grown our economy by 75% while cutting emissions by 43% over the past three decades. The UK has over 460,000 jobs in low carbon businesses and their supply chains and many of the actions we need to take to reach our target of net zero emissions by 2050 will support jobs and growth across the UK. The Prime Minister is keeping up the momentum. As Chair of the Cabinet Committee on Climate Change he has galvanised the Government's net zero approach across its different Departments.

The Government is determined to act on climate change, and the COVID-19 crisis has not changed this. In his speech of June 30, the Prime Minister made clear that in recovering from COVID-19, we must build back better, build back greener, build back faster, and to do that at the pace that this moment requires. Our economy must be greener, more sustainable, and more resilient. This year alone, the Government has set out billions as it ramps up support for our low-carbon economy and green jobs. We are taking action in every sector, providing £1 billion support for ultra-low emission vehicles, £800 million to capture carbon from power stations and industry, a £640 million Nature Climate Fund and £100 million for research and development into Direct Air Capture technologies.

At the Chancellor's economic update on July 8, the Government set out the next stage in our plan to support the UK's recovery from the pandemic. Over £3 billion of green investment will create thousands of green jobs and upgrade homes and public buildings across the country. This includes £50m to demonstrate innovative

approaches to retrofitting social housing at scale, to start the decarbonisation of social housing over 2020/21; a £2 billion 'Green Homes Grant' to help people improve the efficiency of their homes, accelerating progress towards net zero while supporting jobs and reducing energy bills; and a £1 billion investment over the next year in a new Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to upgrade public sector buildings, including schools and hospitals, making them fit to help meet net zero through improved energy efficiency and low carbon heating.

Meeting our net-zero target will require virtually all heat in buildings to be decarbonised, and heat in industry to be reduced to close to zero carbon emissions. The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Building Strategy later this year, which will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings. These include the deployment of energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating as part of an ambitious programme of work required to enable key strategic decisions on how we achieve the mass transition to low-carbon heat.

We are developing policies to deliver low carbon heating in the 2020s and meet our climate targets. A Future Homes Standard, introduced by 2025, will require new build homes to be future proofed with low carbon heating and world leading levels of energy efficiency. We have also committed to consulting on phasing out the installation of fossil fuel heating systems in off gas grid properties and accelerating the decarbonisation of our gas supplies by increasing the proportion of green gas in the grid. We will be publishing these consultations in due course.

We will continue to build on this even further and deliver a stronger, greener, more sustainable economy after this pandemic. The Government will continue to set out further measures as part of its green agenda in the run up to COP26 in November 2021.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I hope that this letter demonstrates the desire to ensure a green and fair recovery from COVID-19.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kwasi Kwarteng', written in a cursive style.

RT HON KWASI KWARTENG MP
Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth