



The Rt. Hon. Claire Coutinho MP  
The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

**Date:** 24-11-23

The Rt. Hon. Mark Harper MP  
The Department for Transport  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Dear Secretary of State Coutinho and Secretary of State Harper,

### **Supporting East of England Net Zero Ambition and Commitment**

We hope this letter finds you in good health. On Wednesday the 20<sup>th</sup> September, MP's, elected members and influential representatives from the private and public sector met for the 2023 East of England Net Zero Conference.

Collaboration was the golden thread that ran through the day's proceedings. The partnership and consensus across the public and private sectors, political parties and across geographical boundaries was palpable. Delegates heard about the region's current successes and future opportunities and challenges in the following topics:

1. Innovation and Investment
2. Net Zero Housing
3. Retrofit Skills
4. Local Area Energy Planning
5. Transport Decarbonisation
6. Aviation, Freight and Logistics

At a time when there is much speculation and uncertainty around the UK's net zero pathway, it was reassuring to hear that levels of commitment and momentum are running high for the East of England. The societal and economic benefits of continuing, and even accelerating, progress towards net zero are clear for all to see and partners in the East of England are committed to this journey.

With greater support from the Government to capitalise on our region's huge potential, so much more could be achieved:

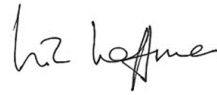

- Councils, working with partners across the public and private sector could do so much more if the Government could commit to a **simplified, less competitive approach towards funding** allocations for net zero activity.
- A clear, long-term strategic approach and funding regime needs to be developed to **secure the desperately needed green jobs** of our economy.
- **Consistency and clarity on net zero targets and policy.** Businesses, local authorities and other partners need certainty to plan for and fund their climate priority activities.
- It is unfair that East of England residents should experience adverse impacts from our region's huge success in generating offshore wind power for the UK. The National Grid should re-visit plans for the 'Norwich to Tilbury' infrastructure project and **explore the potential for an offshore connection rather than onshore pylons.**
- A **systematic, long-term strategy regarding renewable energy sources** and their intended application is required to understand the associated infrastructure requirements and economic potential for the East of England.
- Sufficient and stable funding for all local authorities in the region **to improve bus services** and ensure public transport provides a more realistic alternative to the private car in a region without major metropolitan centres and with large rural areas.
- **Continued government support toward public electric vehicle charging infrastructure** to ensure all areas are catered for and to leverage ongoing private investment to help meet the nearly 50,000 new public charge points needed in the East of England by 2035.

Please click [here](#) to watch a short video produced at the conference.

It is positive that the Local Net Zero Forum provides a space for engagement between central government, local government and other partners on the climate change agenda at the national level. However, via the East of England's Regional Climate Change Forum, Transport East, England's Economic Heartland, the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport and partners in the East of England would appreciate greater collaboration with the Government on the opportunities and challenges in our region and the impact these have for the UK.

We would greatly appreciate it if you could respond to the key points made in this letter at your earliest convenience.

Yours Sincerely



**Cllr Richard Roberts**

Chair of the Regional  
Climate Change  
Forum

Leader of  
Hertfordshire County  
Council

**Graham  
McAndrew**

Chair of The  
Chartered Institute  
of Logistics &  
Transport, Eastern  
Region

**Cllr Liz Leffman**

Chair of England's  
Economic  
Heartland

Leader of  
Oxfordshire County  
Council

**Cllr Kevin Bentley**

Chair of Transport  
East

Leader of Essex  
County Council