

MAYOR OF NEWHAM

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Kwasi Kwarteng MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
House of Commons
London
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30th June 2022

By email

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you in the light of the publication from the Climate Change Committee on 29 June, 'Progress in reducing emissions 2022 Report to Parliament', which sets out concerns that the Government is failing to enact policies necessary to meeting the vital targets for net zero.

As the Mayor of Newham, committed to achieving net zero by 2045 in my borough, I particularly want to endorse the report's recommendation that urgent action is needed from central government to support local authorities in meeting climate goals as we are at a 'pivotal point'. On the role of local government, the report makes a strong call for a 'clearer shared understanding of what aspects of net zero central and local government are responsible for and how these will be coordinated.' It reiterates calls for agreed frameworks for delivery with local flexibility and, importantly, greater strategic and longer-term funding.

This is fundamental, given the existing pressures already on local government, the real cuts to funding that we have seen over the past 12 years, the additional and ongoing costs of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of the current Cost of Living crisis.

The Committee has rightly pointed to the need for a strengthened approach from national government in supporting local climate action. Specifically, they have emphasised the need for central and local government to work in partnership with clarity about their respective roles and responsibilities in reaching net zero. They point to the UK100 example of what this would look like and urge a better use of the Local Net Zero Forum and the renewed Net Zero Hubs.

Importantly, the report points to how both powers and funding can enable local government, and for a more strategic and co-ordinated approach. The report consequently urges an assessment of local government powers and capacity, as well as funding, something I would strongly support, to strengthen our ability to deliver the response to the climate emergency that we face.

WE ARE NEWHAM.



Local Authorities like Newham are working hard to deliver on our climate emergency action plans to meet net zero - for us by 2030 for council operations and borough-wide by 2045. We are also preparing to publish our first ever Climate Budget reflecting the pioneering approach being progressed by the City of Oslo. This will ensure the alignment of the Council's financial plans and our emission targets.

However, we urgently need the strategic and financial support from central government to help enable us to do this. Moreover, the recently published Census 2021 figures provide an added impetus for urgent action.

In Newham we have seen a greater than anticipated growth in population, some 14 per cent on 2011 figures, double that of London's growth overall, and the second highest increase in the London. Our resident population has risen to 351,100 reflecting a vibrant and growing borough with huge potential. We want to make sure that this growth is aligned to our carbon zero intentions for the borough.

Local government has an absolutely vital role to play to meet net carbon zero. I trust this latest report will inspire action from your department and wider government in providing the necessary funding to Councils like Newham.

Moreover, I would welcome a discussion with you and your officials about how we can enable the strategic co-ordination between local and central government to 'unlock local delivery' in response to the climate crisis facing us, as we have some practical ideas and plans.

I will be asking my office to be in touch with yours to coordinate a visit to Newham so that we can show you what is already underway.

Yours sincerely,



Rokhsana Fiaz OBE
Mayor of Newham

Cc: Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Greg Hands, Minister of State in the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Clean Air, Clean Energy, Green Growth and Climate Change)
Ed Miliband, Shadow Secretary of State of Climate Change and Net Zero
Lord Debden, Chair Climate Change Committee