



The Rt. Honorable Boris Johnson MP  
Office of the Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

### **Supporting community energy is essential to achieving net-zero.**

We are delighted that you have committed to the "colossal investments" necessary "to make this country the cleanest, greenest on earth, with the most far-reaching environmental programme" and "to be carbon-neutral by 2050." We have to take the people with us in this vital endeavour - not least because the Committee on Climate Change says that 62% of measures to achieve net-zero are dependent upon behaviour change<sup>i</sup>.

Community energy is local people getting together to deliver locally owned and controlled renewable energy, demand reduction and fuel poverty work. Community energy harnesses the passion, skill and capital of the community to deliver solutions to climate change, community resilience as well as huge social and community benefit<sup>ii</sup>. So it's win, win, win.

In 2015 the coalition's Community Energy Strategy<sup>iii</sup> envisioned 1 million homes powered by community energy by 2020. But sadly due to policy setbacks over the last five years the sector is stalled and frustrated and less than a tenth of this potential has been realised. Claire Perry MP (former Minister for Energy and Clean Growth) said in 2019, "community energy is a key cornerstone of the... transition to a low-carbon, smart energy system"<sup>iv</sup>. The community can be a real powerhouse in achieving our climate targets but only if empowered to act.

This requires policy support together with financial and practical support to enable those volunteers to go to work. And this is popular!

A poll by Co-op Energy found that 82% of respondents, a record high, think the Government should do more to help local communities generate their own energy, and 69% think the Government should change its mind and once again offer tax relief to those individuals who take the risk of investing in community energy.

We therefore ask that:

- Community energy be supported by a new Community Energy Strategy, a community energy team at BEIS and good cross-departmental working group receiving input from the sector itself. This will put people at the heart of the energy system and help ensure a just transition in which no-one is left behind.
- Government, together with Ofgem, the Networks and community energy identify and fully resource an approach to energy planning at local levels that sets out a core role for community energy groups.
- Social Investment Tax Relief be reinstated for community energy and the recent VAT rise from 5% to 20% on Energy Saving Measures be reversed and ultimately reduced to 0%.

We look forward to working with Number 10, the Cabinet Office and BEIS to help these happen.

Yours sincerely

---

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf> 5.6

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-renewable-electricity-generation-potential-sector-growth-to-2020> Government commissions report calculates that community energy delivers 12-13 times the social and community benefit of commercial energy installations

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-energy-strategy>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.energylivenews.com/2019/01/08/claire-perry-from-power-stations-to-solar-panels-the-future-is-local/>