



Department for
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Dear Colleague,

As we have all seen this week, public concern about climate change is growing to unprecedented levels and regardless of views on the merits of school strikes and city protests, the voices being raised reflect the growing intensity and urgency of public debate on this issue.

The threat of global warming has never been more apparent, as highlighted by the sobering conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) special report on global warming of 1.5°C. But, in parallel, we are also now witnessing an unstoppable momentum towards a more ambitious global response, most recently demonstrated by agreement on a 'rulebook' for the Paris Agreement at the most recent round of UN talks in Poland last year.

As I said in the House this week, I welcome this transition of the climate debate from niche to mainstream. But in my view, there are two areas of the debate that need more attention:

- There is an insufficient focus on the achievements that we have made to date and this means the tone of the conversation can be fearful not hopeful; and
- We have already signalled that we want to be more ambitious both in our actions and, crucially, in driving concerted global actions.

I therefore thought it would be helpful to summarise some of the facts around these two points and I have also included a summary of "Ten Climate Actions to Celebrate" that may be of use to you in your constituency work.

We should all be proud of the UK's world-leading role in tackling climate change and the transition to Clean Growth. We were the first country to introduce legally binding long-term emissions targets under the landmark Climate Change Act in 2008 where we played an important role in offering committed cross-party support to pass the legislation. The Act set in place binding carbon budgets that now commit us to a 57 percent reduction in emissions by 2032. Since 1990, we have now cut emissions by 42 per cent while growing the economy by over 72 per cent and an independent assessment by [PWC](#) shows that the UK has decarbonised its economy at the fastest rate of G20 countries since 2000 – we have cut our emissions per unit of national income on average by 3.7 per cent a year, well ahead of the EU average of 2.3 per cent and the G7 average of 2.2 per cent. **The last time the UK's emissions were this low was in 1888!**

Our achievements in cutting emissions from our electricity generation particularly stand out. More than half of the UK's electricity was generated from low-carbon sources last year, the highest ever share, while we achieved a record 90 hours of continuous coal-free generation over the Easter weekend – when many of us were elected in 2010, coal based generation was over 30 per cent of the total. Our renewable capacity has quadrupled since 2010 and the UK has the largest installed offshore wind capacity in the world thanks to our sustained investment in this crucial technology. The new Offshore Wind Sector Deal I launched in March, provides one of many examples of how the Government and industry will work in partnership to put the UK in the forefront of Clean Growth.

However, we recognise the need to go further to meet and exceed our current target of an at least 80 per cent reduction in emissions by 2050. The Clean Growth Strategy that I published in October 2017 (found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy>) sets out our plans to build on our remarkable progress in the power sector while advancing decarbonisation across the whole of the economy, with ambitious proposals on housing, business, transport, and the natural environment. I believe it is the most comprehensive plan for whole economy decarbonisation published by any Government.

We have continued to make excellent progress in recent months. At the Spring Statement, many colleagues joined me in welcoming the Chancellor's announcement of a Future Homes Standard which by 2025 will see new build homes future-proofed with low carbon heating and world leading levels of energy efficiency, along with new plans to increase the proportion of green gas used in the grid in a bid to drive down the carbon profile of the UK's gas heating network.

Recognising the huge opportunities for the UK of the global shift to decarbonisation, we have placed Clean Growth at the heart of our Industrial Strategy and emphasised the crucial role of market mechanisms, targeted innovation investment, and industry challenges to drive progress further. Two 'missions' have already been announced under the Clean Growth Grand Challenge: to establish the world's first net-zero carbon industrial cluster in the UK by 2040; and to dramatically improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, each supported by innovation funding under the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. The low carbon sector already employs almost 400,000 people (directly and in its supply chains), is growing rapidly, and offers huge export opportunities for goods and services over the next decade.

But we know, especially after the publication of the IPCC Report last year, that we have to be prepared to do more. After assessing the sobering conclusions of this report, we were the first major industrialised nation to ask for advice on setting a 'Net-Zero' emissions target and our independent advisers, the Committee on Climate Change, will be giving us their view on May 2nd. We will consider their evidence-based advice carefully to determine what actions we need to take.

However, climate change is too broad a challenge for this Government to tackle alone. This is a global problem to which the solution will be global commitment and I want to use the UK's leadership and ambition to work with other countries around the world. We played an influential role in delivering the historic Paris Agreement in 2015 and only last year we helped create the first "rulebook" to bring the Paris Agreement to life at the latest round of UN talks in Poland. We have used our progress in phasing out coal to set up and lead the Powering Past Coal Alliance, which now has over 80 members. We are providing at least £5.8 billion in international climate finance from 2016 to 2020 to help developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change and as you may be aware, the UK has offered to host the 2020 UN climate change conference (COP26) and we are glad that this has received cross-party support.

I am always happy to provide any more information you may need and thank you wholeheartedly for your support to date.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a smaller 'P' and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

THE RT HON CLAIRE PERRY MP
Minister of State

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 percent 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 the longest coal free stretch ever (90 hrs 45 minutes) just this last weekend. 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 percent 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 more than £6 billion in International Climate Finance over this Parliament and [bidding to host the crucial 2020 UN climate negotiations here in the UK](#).