



East of England
All Party Parliamentary Group

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Secretary Clive Lewis MP

Treasurer Dr Dan Poulter MP

Sent by email on 2/1/24

Dear Graham

The East of England's vital 'offer' to the UK as it progresses towards net zero and the region's 'asks' regarding adaptation to climate change

Request for a meeting to discuss key points and asks arising from meeting held Wednesday 6th December

You may recall that we invited you to address the East of England APPG meeting on the 6th of December which focussed on the region's vital 'offer' to the UK as it progresses towards net zero and its 'asks' regarding adaptation to climate change. Unfortunately, the meeting coincided with COP28 and you were therefore unable to attend. Your apologies were recorded and it was agreed that we would write to convey the main points and the East of England's asks, which we would like to request we meet with you to discuss.

There was an excellent discussion at the meeting with a very high level of input from all seven of our speakers. We thought that you would be interested to see the minutes of that meeting – which are attached – as well as a recording of the session - available [here](#) - and the background briefing paper – [here](#). The seven key points – *in italics* – and the associated key asks – **in bold** - that the East of England's politicians, businesses and wider stakeholders would request that you consider are:

- *The UK will not achieve its very important climate change carbon targets without the East of England's contribution: renewables, offshore and possibly on land, as well as potentially biomass too.*
- **There has however been insufficient investment in energy infrastructure. This limits the UK's move to green energy as well as causes problems in the East of England as, for example, it seeks to encourage electric vehicle use.**
- *The East of England is the most vulnerable region in the UK to the impacts of climate change – 20% of its landmass is below sea level and it is already the driest region. This means it is susceptible to drought and flooding as well as heatwaves and fire. It has also seen lots of coastal erosion. Its prime agriculture, which produces one third of the country's vegetables, and its economy, which is a net contributor to the Exchequer, is therefore very vulnerable climate change.*

- **There should be an independent climate risk assessment of the East of England. This would be a quantitative analysis of vulnerable areas with thresholds for adaptation. Given the region is growing and has serious housebuilding plans, this work is all the more important and indeed urgent. It's worth noting already London has thresholds hence Thames Barrier. It's time to set some for East of England.**
- *In a region such as the East of England water availability is not being taken into account early enough in the development and planning processes. The solutions that we have take a long time to develop and construct.*
- **Anglian Water want to see more systemic thinking and long-term planning which includes water resources in the plans for Net Zero. For example. green hydrogen production uses 6-13 litres of water per kilogram of hydrogen. We are helping to develop a green hydrogen plant in the South Humber Bank which is estimated to require 60 megalitres of water a day by 2050, but more broadly water resources need to be far better incorporated into Government plans for the development of hydrogen and other low-carbon technologies.**
- *British Sugar as well as other innovative businesses that are UK Agri Tech Pioneers are looking to the future and looking towards continuous improvement when it comes to decarbonising their operations. They also seek support for deep decarbonisation options for dispersed sites in the East of England, particularly with respect to infrastructure development.*
- **Along with the bio-science and HE sector it is important that the Government realise the potential for innovation in the East of England – and that the skills and employment opportunities that flows from these are realised.**
- *Hydrogen production and transportation in the east of England is a fantastic opportunity to develop skills and investment in the region.*
- **The Government need to think about energy transition from a whole system social change point of view ie look more at what is the human impact; and we need to make use of existing infrastructure in order for this to be a just transition: an affordable solution for customers.**
- *Offshore wind is the key driver of the further decarbonization of the UK's power system. The industry has been crying out for more port capacity for decades and it's a massive bottleneck which creates inefficiencies and drives up costs. One key – relevant and helpful - project at Freeport East is one called Bathside Bay which is a proposed offshore wind and clean fuels port. The site is unique in terms of its depth of water and acreage. This is also a project that would deliver more for levelling up in Tendring than almost any other intervention the government are currently funding.*
- **The Government should support efforts to deliver capacity for floating offshore wind industry, which is the next generation beyond the fixed bottom offshore wind, and specifically support the Bathside Bay initiative at Freeport East which has already secured private investment so it is ready to go in terms of the existing land owners and Port operators at Harwich.**

- *Place based climate action is required as well as national activity. This on the ground activity should complement national frameworks. Often local communities think Net Zero means things being done to them without them having an opportunity to shape that and I think climate ambassadors have a real role to play in addressing in alleviating those concerns.*
- **Government should promote sound and consistent policy on climate change. It should also work with local authorities and Climate Change Commissions to identify how they can be supported to take local action towards net zero. Specifically, the Government should move away from making councils enter into competitive bidding for funding which is extremely time consuming and expensive. Climate change action is urgent and LAs would be able to get more work done if funding was made easier to apply for.**

We very much look forward to hearing from you. If you would be happy to meet in Whitehall to discuss these issues please would you ask your officials to liaise regarding the logistics with Steve Barwick of the APPG Secretariat, who has sent this email on our behalf.

Yours sincerely



Peter Aldous MP
Co-Chair



Daniel Zeichner MP
Co-Chair

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The academic partners of the East of England APPG are the Centre for Public and Policy Engagement at the University of Essex, The University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University and the University of East Anglia.

