East of England
All Party Parliamentary Group
Co-Chairs: Jess Asato MP & Pam Cox MP
Vice-Chairs: Blake Stephenson MP & Marie Goldman MP

Dear Micheal

We are writing further to your keynote contribution at the East of England APPG meeting on 17 March 2026, ***"Responding to the Climate Change Challenge: The East of England's key role in making Britain a clean energy superpower",*** and to thank you for your time and engagement in what was a constructive and wide-ranging discussion.

As Officers of the APPG, we welcome the Government's commitment to clean energy and economic growth and noted your support for Sizewell C, the expansion of offshore wind, and wider ambitions for clean energy infrastructure. We were particularly encouraged by your recognition of the East of England as a strategically vital region in delivering a clean, secure and resilient energy system.

As discussed at the meeting, if the United Kingdom were designing its energy system from first principles today, much of it would be located along the coastline of the East of England. The region already combines offshore wind, nuclear, gas infrastructure, interconnection and emerging hydrogen and carbon capture opportunities in a way that is unique in the UK and rare across Europe. It is not simply part of the UK energy system — it is increasingly where that system comes together.

As we know, the region's already central role in national energy supply has the potential, with Government support, to develop into a fully integrated and even greater clean energy corridor over the coming decade. We therefore welcome the government's announcement - just after the meeting - of a new initiative to provide discounted electricity to households and businesses in areas with high renewable energy generation, which primarily benefits the East of England as well as Scotland.

However, the consistent message throughout the session was that in order to realise the scale of opportunity in the East of England - across offshore wind, nuclear, hydrogen, gas, carbon capture and associated supply chains - will depend on addressing a number of systemic barriers.

First, there was strong concern about infrastructure constraints, particularly in relation to grid capacity and connections. While we welcome the Government's recognition of these challenges and the proposed reforms, there is a clear need for accelerated delivery of both transmission and local network upgrades to unlock projects and investment in the region.

Second, participants emphasised the importance of capturing greater economic value locally from the rapidly growing clean energy sector. The UK and the East of England does not have a delivery system that matches its energy ambitions — and that gap is now the biggest risk to energy security, growth and net zero. There is an urgent need to ensure that

supply chains, manufacturing activity and associated jobs are retained within the UK and, where possible, within the East of England itself. In this context, strategic investment in Freeport East and BEACON – the Bacton Energy and Carbon Opportunity Network - as well as wider port infrastructure and industrial capacity was identified as a key enabler.

Third, the need for a significantly strengthened skills pipeline was raised repeatedly. The scale of the transition will require a substantial expansion of the workforce, including engineers, technicians and construction specialists. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of a more coordinated, demand-led approach to skills provision, with stronger alignment between industry, education providers and government. In parts of our region, such as Great Yarmouth and Jaywick, communities with over 30% unemployed sit alongside nationally significant energy infrastructure, yet do not always see a clear pathway into those careers.

Fourth, local authorities and regional partners highlighted challenges relating to funding and delivery capacity. Concerns were raised about the current distribution of net zero funding to local councils and the administrative burden associated with competitive bidding processes. There is a clear appetite for a fairer and more strategic framework that recognises local added value and enables local areas to plan and deliver effectively.

Fifth, the importance of adopting a more joined-up approach to infrastructure planning was strongly emphasised. In particular, the interdependencies between energy, water and wider development were highlighted, with stakeholders calling for closer coordination across Government departments to ensure long-term resilience.

Sixth the APPG also wishes to underline the importance of adaptation as well as decarbonisation. The East of England faces significant and immediate climate risks, including flooding, coastal erosion and water scarcity. There is a strong case for ensuring that investment in resilience and adaptation sits alongside efforts to accelerate clean energy deployment. A climate change risk register for the East of England would seem a prudent investment.

In conclusion, there was a clear message that the transition to clean energy must deliver tangible benefits for local communities. While there is broad support for the clean energy agenda, stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring that communities hosting major infrastructure see clear economic and social returns, and are actively engaged in the process.

We were encouraged by your acknowledgement of many of these issues and your openness to continued dialogue. The APPG would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your officials to explore these themes further, including how the East of England can best support the Government's ambitions while securing long-term benefits for the region. In the first instance, your responses to the six issues highlighted above would be welcome

Thank you once again for your time and contribution to the discussion. We look forward to continuing this important conversation.

Yours sincerely

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