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Open letter from organisations to the Secretaries of State for BEIS, MHCLG, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Ofgem Chief Executive, in support of the Environmental Audit Committee's recommendations to government on removing the barriers to community energy.

26th May 2021

Dear Secretaries of State, Ministers, Chancellor and Ofgem,

Action on Environmental Audit Committee recommendations on community energy

We, the undersigned organisations, support the Environmental Audit Committee's Letter to the government which recommends 'Removing the barriers to the development of community energy.'

We support its recommendations - first and foremost that the importance of community energy be recognised in the Net Zero Strategy and, vitally, by instituting "practical support measures to harness the potential of community energy". These must be included in the Net Zero Review and funded in the Comprehensive Spending Review, this autumn.

Community energy is essential to getting the buy in and active participation of the wider public, without which, as the Climate Change Committee has repeatedly warned, "It will not be possible to get close to meeting a net-zero target." The Climate Assembly UK report to the government highlighted "informing and educating everyone", "fairness within the UK, including for the most vulnerable" and "local community engagement" as prioritised principles to underpin the path to net zero. Community energy can be a key ally to the Government here. It can deliver significantly greater social and community benefits than purely commercial interventions, ensuring people and communities are not left behind. Community energy is essential to realising a just transition and harnessing local opportunities and synergies that otherwise would not happen.

We urge you to work together to ensure that the specific recommendations in the Committee's letter are taken seriously and enacted. These include removing the regulatory barriers to local supply of energy and providing specific financial supports for community energy such as is available for commercial onshore renewable energy, namely: a Community Smart Export Guarantee, with a long-

term floor price; an Urban Community Energy Fund; a replacement for the Renewable Heat Incentive for community energy and funding for Local Area Energy Planning and local authority/community energy collaborations.

We look forward to hearing positive news from you and seeing the cross-departmental working, collaboration with devolved administrations, regulatory enabling, support for local authority/community energy planning and collaboration, and learning from international best practice that the Committee advocates.

We look forward to seeing community energy fulfill its potential, adding value to communities and empowering them to meet their own needs, and ensuring no one and no community is left behind in a just energy transition.

Yours sincerely

Emma Bridge

Community Energy England,
Chief Executive

Danielle Palmour Walker

Friends Provident
Foundation, Director

Vidhya Alakeson

Power to Change,
Chief Executive

National Organisations

Association for Renewable Energy and
Clean Technologies (REA),
Dr Nina Skorupska CBE, CEO

Big Society Capital,
Stephen Muers, CEO

Black2Nature,
Dr Mya-Rose Craig, Founder &
President

Centre for Sustainable Energy,
Keith Hempshall, Head of Local and
Community Empowerment

Co-operatives UK,
Rose Marley, CEO

Community Energy Scotland,
Janet Foggie, CEO

Community Energy Wales,
Robert Proctor, Business
Development Manager

CPRE, the countryside charity,
Crispin Truman OBE, Chief
Executive

Energy Networks Association,
Randolph Brazier, Director of
Innovation & Electricity Systems

Energy Saving Trust,
Mike Thornton, CEO

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation,
Caroline Mason, CEO

Ethex,
Lisa Ashford, CEO

Forum for the Future,
Sally Uren, Chief Executive

Green Alliance,
Shaun Spiers, Executive Director

Greenpeace,
Doug Parr, Policy Director

Islamic Foundation for Ecology and
Environmental Sciences,
Fazlun Khalid, Founder

Locality,
Tony Armstrong, Chief Executive

Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation,
Jonathan Gillett, Trustee

Possible,
Max Wakefield, Director

Power for People,
Steve Shaw, Founder director

Regen,
Jodie Giles, Senior Project Manager,
Communities

Scottish Communities Climate Action
Network,
Philip Revell, Convenor

Social Enterprise UK,
Peter Holbrook, CEO

Sustainable Energy Association,
Jade Lewis, CEO

Thrive Renewables,
Matthew Clayton, Managing Director

Triodos Bank UK,
Philip Bazin, Head of Project Finance

UK Power Networks,
Emma Kemp, Competition &
Community Energy Engagement
Lead

Community Organisations

Awel Co-op,
Dan McCallum, Director

Bath and West Community Energy,
Pete Capener, Managing Director

Bright Renewables (Community Owned
Asset Management Limited),
Ania Vercellotti, Managing Director

Brighton & Hove Energy Services
Co-operative (BHESCO),
Kayla Ente, CEO & Founder

Bristol Energy Network,
David Tudgey, Project Development
Manager

Circular Malton & Norton CIC,
Sue Jefferson, Director

CREW Energy,
Toby Costin, Chair

Datblygiadau Egni Gwledig (DEG),
Grant Peisley, Director

Dorset Community Energy,
Pete West, Director

East Dorset Friends of the Earth,
Angela Pooley, Group Coordinator

Eco Community UK CIC,
Helen Tandy, Director

Egni Co-op,
Rosie Gillam, Director

EN10ERGY,
Mrs Sydney Charles, Vice-chair

Energise South Community Energy,
Julia Hilton, Chair

Energy4All,
Mike Smyth, Chair

Energy Alton,
John Hubbard, Chairman

Energy Local,
Dr Mary Gillie CEng, Founding
Director

Energy Oasis,
Mike Kaye, Managing Director

Gower Power Co-op CIC,
Ant Flanagan, Director

Gower Regeneration,
Roy Church, Chair

Greater Manchester Community
Renewables Ltd,
Kate Eldridge, Director

Green Light,
Rosemary Harthill, Convenor

Green Rose Community Interest Company,
Georgina Sommerville, Director

Grimsby Community Energy
Dr Vicky Dunn, Secretary

Harborough Energy,
Peter Jones OBE, Chair

Kingston Community Energy Project,
Tony Wheeler, Project Leader

Lymm Community Energy Ltd,
Richard Pearce, Director

Repowering London,
Dr. Afsheen Kabir Rashid MBE, CEO

Sheffield Friends of the Earth,
Lindy Stone, Coordinator

Sheffield Renewables,
Jean Tinsley, Company Secretary

South Brent Community Energy Society,
Edward Chapman, Company
Secretary

South Dartmoor Community Energy,
Sophie Philips, Chair

South East London Community Energy
(SELCE),
Alex Hartley, Co-founder/Director

South Somerset Community Energy Society,
John Christmas, Chair

Sustainable Harborough Community,
Rev Brian Davies, Chairman

Sustaining Dunbar,
Philip Revell, Director

Swansea Community Energy and Enterprise
Scheme,
Gareth Tucker, Chair

Teign Energy Communities,
Fuad Al-Tawil, Director & Company
Secretary

Transition Exeter,
Gill Westcott, Co-Chair

Transition Town Berkhamsted,
John Bell, Secretary

Yealm Community Energy,
Peter M Brown FRCS, Chairman

YnNi Teg,
Rob Proctor, Director

Zero Carbon Harrogate,
Fiona Jones, Secretary

Zero Carbon Yorkshire,
Tony Hermann, Trustee

(74 signatories)

