

Subject: A National Community Energy Fund and a plan and support for community energy

19 May 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

We are still awaiting a response to our letter of 21 February and follow up of 1 April, (attached and below)

We note that Lord Callanan was saying, in a reply to Maria Caulfield MP on 22 March, that "The question of the level of funding for community energy, including the RCEF, has not yet been decided" from which we take some small comfort. But it is disappointing when the Environmental Audit Committee was promised in June 2021 that the Net Zero Strategy would contain "our future plans for community energy....in lieu of a specific strategy on community energy".

Following the [ITN news piece](#) about community energy on 13 April, the journalist reported that the government had informed him that it "accepts that more could be done in future and says it will consider community energy in a future strategy."

The Energy Bill is the next strategy. Please ensure that it contains a plan, and 'practical support measures to harness the potential of community energy' as the Environmental Audit Committee recommended. Alongside this we would like to revive our, and the Environmental Audit Committee's request for a dedicated, detailed Community Energy Strategy as soon as possible. This must not be an excuse to delay support for the sector.

With a relatively small investment from government, community energy will harness many times that in community investment to grow exponentially again, spread into every community, give a home to the increasing desire for local climate action, exploit the local opportunities and create the synergies that only it can, and deliver huge community, social and public engagement benefits, whilst decarbonising, localising and democratising the energy system. Community energy is smart and local and must be at the heart of the government's roll-out of its Smart Local Energy Systems and Local Area Energy Planning.

I would really like your thoughts on the fact that £1m from the capital growth funds will deliver £1m worth of projects, whilst if invested through the RCEF in the north west of England it could mobilise £69m of community energy projects, which would deliver much greater levelling up as well as the benefits mentioned above.

I hope that this can be factored into investment calculations about

extending and expanding the RCEF into a National Community Energy Fund enabling urban, rural, generation, heat, energy efficiency and retrofit projects.

Lord Callanan has kindly agreed to record a short video as a keynote address for our national conference on 18 June, focussing on Energy Transitions. It would be great if this could be preceded by the announcement of firm, substantial support measures for the community energy sector.

Additionally, our State of the Sector report is in draft now and will be launched on 9 June. I would dearly love to alter the text to hail proactive support by this government for the thousands of passionate, determined, community energy entrepreneurs and volunteers, in their mission to drive towards net zero and deliver social benefit, at scale. Our [2021 report](#) contains policy asks, many of which still remain valid.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. If a meeting with you would be useful in framing a better case to do this, or what should be in the Energy Bill, we stand ready.

Best regards  
Duncan Law