

The Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP  
Secretary of State for Business,  
Energy and Industrial Strategy  
1 Victoria Street  
Westminster  
London SW1H 0ET

ask for: Councillor Steve Jordan  
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email: cllr.steve.jordan@cheltenham.gov.uk  
our ref: SJ/BR  
your ref:  
date: 25 October 2019

Dear Secretary of State,

In July of this year, Cheltenham Borough Council, like many other councils, declared a climate emergency and committed to becoming a carbon neutral Council and Borough by 2030.

The Council engaged a leading expert in the field of climate change and sustainability, Simon Graham, Head of Innovation at De Courcy Alexander, to develop a roadmap for eliminating Cheltenham borough's carbon footprint and we now have a proposed programme of activities and initiatives encompassing leadership, engagement, energy, transport and buildings to enable Cheltenham to achieve this goal. Initiatives include, but are not limited to:

- **The Cheltenham Standard**, a visionary statement for setting a benchmark for low-carbon living
- **Lead by Example**, a programme of demonstration projects to help break down barriers to the adoption of zero carbon solutions
- **Climate Action Fund** to help finance the road to zero carbon
- **Cheltenham Green Deal**, broadening access to carbon reduction initiatives to communities that cannot currently afford the high up-front capital expenses
- **Community Engagement**, building capacity for local people to be fully involved
- **Climate Champions**, inspiring communities and enterprises to find new solutions
- **Cheltenham Energy**, a new local zero emission energy provider facilitated by the Council
- **Smart Cheltenham**, a vision for integrated living in West Cheltenham that promotes a low carbon lifestyle
- **Zero Carbon Hubs**, decentralised futureproof centres promoting zero emission mobility
- **Return to Regency**, a competition for developers to demonstrate leadership and innovation to build carbon positive communities

We are confident that delivering our roadmap, in partnership with others, will enable the council and the community of Cheltenham to achieve the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

We also firmly believe this programme can deliver substantial benefits for a wide range of other issues including fuel poverty, air quality, health and wellbeing, resilience and economic growth.

But we cannot achieve this without support from Government.

Specifically we are calling for:

- 1) Access to sustainable funding. Cheltenham's programme is expected to be cost neutral over time, but substantial funding will be needed in the first few years to secure the expertise that is needed and provide initial financial investment for our initiatives.
- 2) A mechanism to enable easy and timely access to government funding streams.
- 3) A favourable financial landscape which supports zero carbon investment.
- 4) Devolved powers to enable the Council to set standards and requirements appropriate for our locality and which may exceed those expected at a national level. This will need to be backed by Government support for the introduction of these standards, to ensure they can be upheld through any challenge process. This is of particular relevance to new development within the planning environment and in relation to listed buildings.
- 5) The introduction of national policies to support faster local climate change action.

Given the right tools, we believe Cheltenham is well-placed to demonstrate leadership in achieving carbon neutrality. The town's MP, Alex Chalk, sponsored the widely welcomed Climate Change (Net Zero UK Carbon Account) Bill; we are an award-winning council and our communities want to be involved in taking action to address climate change. We also have a tremendous opportunity to deliver a flagship 'carbon positive' development as we embark on the delivery of a nationally significant Cyber Park in West Cheltenham next to GCHQ, with an associated Garden Community development delivering 3,000 homes, which already has government support.

Cheltenham Borough Council is just one of many councils to have declared a climate emergency with cross-party support and therefore, we urge Government to provide local councils and our communities with the power and resources to implement measures in support of the UK's commitments on climate change, in order to deliver a positive and sustainable future for the generations who will succeed us.

Yours sincerely



**Steve Jordan**  
**Leader of the Council**

Copy to: Alex Chalk MP  
Cllr Joe Harris, Leader Cotswold District Council  
Cllr Tim Gwilliam, Leader Forest of Dean District Council  
Cllr Paul James, Leader Gloucester City Council  
Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Leader Gloucestershire County Council  
Cllr Doina Cornell, Stroud District Council  
Cllr Rob Bird, Tewkesbury Borough Council  
Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive LGA  
Bryony Houlden, Chief Executive SW Councils