



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

Harry Catherall  
Chief Executive  
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**The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP**  
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth  
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22 March 2022

Dear Mr Catherall,

Thank you for your letter dated 5 November, to the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, regarding COP26 and the Net Zero Strategy. I am replying as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio. Please accept my apologies for the delay in this response reaching you.

We agree that Local Authorities have had significant opportunities to make an impact locally on Net Zero independently of National Government. Local Authorities have a combination of powers and assets including reserves which gives them autonomy to deliver on net zero. Most, like Oldham, have passed local Climate Emergency motions and many set target dates and developed action plans. Much of Local Authority funding is not ring fenced in recognition that local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet the pressures in their local area – including for net zero. They manage significant assets in their locations including assets and can raise funding locally for specific objectives such as Net Zero.

We recognise that national Governments have a crucial role to play in building on current work to effectively support local areas to deliver national net zero ambitions. The Net Zero Strategy sets out our commitments to enable local areas to deliver net zero, and this includes setting clearer expectations on how central and local Government interact in the delivery of net zero. As announced in the Strategy, we also intend to establish a Local Net Zero Forum. Chaired by BEIS, the forum will be cross departmental and bring together national and local Government senior officials on a regular basis to discuss policy and delivery options on net zero. It will support the establishment of clearer delivery roles for local Government and provide a single engagement route into HM Government in a coordinated and coherent way.

With respect to the Oldham Town Centre heat network, I am pleased to see that the council has been engaging with the BEIS Heat Networks Delivery Unit on this project. As you may be aware, we will be launching the Green Heat Network Fund (GHNF) next year. The GHNF is intended to run until 2025 and will support new and existing heat networks to adopt low carbon technologies. You can find out more about the GHNF here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/green-heat-network-fund-proposals-for-the-scheme-design>. If you or one of the council team would like to be added to the mailing list for future announcements on this scheme, please email [ghnfcorrespondence@beis.gov.uk](mailto:ghnfcorrespondence@beis.gov.uk).

Thanks again for taking the time to write. I hope you will find this reply helpful.

Yours ever.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Hands', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**THE RT HON GREG HANDS MP**  
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change