



**East of England**

**All Party Parliamentary Group**

**Co-Chairs:** Jess Asato MP and Andrew Pakes MP

**Vice-Chairs:** Blake Stephenson MP & Marie Goldman MP

*Sent by email on 23/1/25*

Dear Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero

**The East of England's vital clean energy 'offer' to the UK as it progresses towards net zero and the region's 'asks' regarding adaptation to climate change**

The East of England APPG met yesterday to discuss issues regarding the region's contribution to net zero targets and how it can guard against the negative impacts of climate change. We were very grateful for a positive response from Minister Michael Shanks MP and, in addition to the attached background briefing paper, the meeting was informed by constructive presentations from:

- Julia Pyke, Joint MD, Sizewell C – see [here](#);
- Steve Beel, Chief Executive of Freeport East – see [here](#);
- Richard Buckingham, Climate Change and Carbon Manager at Anglian Water – see [here](#); and
- Cllr Peter Schwier, Chair of the East of England Climate Change Forum, EELGA – see [here](#).

The meeting made it clear that the UK will not achieve the new climate change carbon targets agreed by the Government at COP29 - to reduce greenhouse gases by at least 81% on 1990 levels by 2035 - without the East of England's contribution to clean energy: renewables, offshore wind and possibly on land, solar and nuclear power as well as biomass.

As you will be aware, the East of England is already home to over 52% of the UK's installed capacity for offshore wind, with over 1,000 wind turbines in operation off our coastline. Meanwhile Scottish Power Renewables is investing in the East Anglia TWO and THREE windfarms significantly expanding capacity and Sizewell C is also already under construction, and awaiting a Final Investment Decision from Government, which is expected to take place alongside the Spending Review.

The meeting also confirmed that the East of England is the most vulnerable region in the UK to the impacts of climate change – 20% of its landmass is below sea level and it is already the driest region. This means it is susceptible to drought and flooding as well as heatwaves and fire: the region has also seen lots of coastal erosion. Given our economy is a net contributor to the Exchequer protecting it and our people is paramount.

The meeting agreed the following twelve 'asks' of Government:

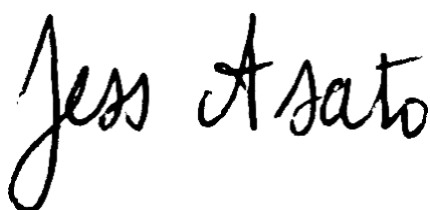
1. **The Government should support the growing green hydrogen sector in the East of England** to ensure the region takes the opportunity to be at the forefront of green hydrogen production. Bacton Sands on the North Norfolk Coast has been announced as a hydrogen and carbon capture hub, while there are key opportunities for green hydrogen to support the decarbonisation at the largest container port in the UK, Felixstowe, and the surrounding area. Hydrogen production for transportation in the East of England is a good opportunity to develop skills and investment. Without these the UK's move to green energy will be limited.
2. **The Government should support the continuation of the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund.** Over the past few years, this has been the primary vehicle for businesses to attract Government support for large projects of "deep" decarbonisation. It is critical that there is still a path for businesses to attract this investment when some of the commercial cases are not so attractive. Government supporting and showing leadership will ensure that the UK can continue to compete with EU businesses who often receive large grants from either the EU or member state governments.
3. **The Government should support the Bathside Bay initiative at Freeport East** in order to facilitate the offshore wind industry. There are on-going and positive discussions around securing private investment, both from established investors as well as fresh FDI, but Government support is also needed.
4. **Low carbon developers in the region should ensure they work with the region's educational facilities to improve the awareness and delivery of the skills needed to support the energy transition.** Providing the region's younger generations with opportunities including more apprenticeships to remain in the region with well skilled, well-paid, long-term jobs, will support future generations and reduce the brain drain, helping grow the region's economy. There are already examples of good practice including at the Energy Skills Centre at Lowestoft and the Centre for Green Technology in Peterborough as well as that being taken forward by organisations such as Sizewell C and Freeport East.
5. **An independent climate risk assessment of the East of England is needed.** This would be a quantitative analysis in partnership with stakeholders of vulnerable areas with thresholds for adaptation. Given the region is growing and has a target of almost 50,000 new homes per year, this work is all the more important. Public Health England Norfolk has a report underway on climate change and health.
6. In order to decarbonise transport, it is important that **the Government should support the Ely and Haughley Junction improvement schemes**, continues to fund local transport such as bus and active travel and supports local authority efforts to install more electric vehicle charging points. There is further debate to be had regarding the introduction of appropriate 20mph urban speed limits.
7. Increases in population are an additional driver of climate change risk, and therefore present the region with even greater adaptation challenges, as well as mitigation. **The housebuilding targets should therefore be accompanied by significant strengthening of planning through statutory building codes for mitigation and adaptation needs.** There also need to be clearer guidelines on embedding energy efficiency and renewable energy into all new housing developments, with housing integrated with low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure.

8. **The forthcoming Infrastructure and Planning Bill should include targeted reforms to deliver a more efficient quicker planning system for low carbon energy infrastructure and supportive infrastructure**, which can improve energy security and deliver lower cost, lower carbon electricity. It should however still ensure that local voices are heard as well as provide that those communities that host energy infrastructure receive some financial benefit.
9. **Anglian Water want to see more systemic thinking and long-term planning in the response to climate change.** Infrastructure providers are interdependent on each other's infrastructure (e.g. water supply and wastewater treatment is dependent on energy and communications) and failure can cascade throughout this interconnected network. A crucial aspect of adaptation is working with other sectors to better understand these interdependencies and plan for resilience. Furthermore, there is a need for more joined up thinking to consider the impact on water resources from the plans for reaching Net Zero. Green hydrogen production uses 6-13 litres of water per kilogram of hydrogen but there is no joined up plan from Government for meeting this need. (Using desalinated sea water may be an option worth more consideration.) Water resources need to be far better incorporated into Government plans for the development of hydrogen and other low-carbon technologies.
10. **Sugar beet pulp reclassification will help support biogas production** at British Sugar's Bury St Edmunds factory where sugar beet pulp is currently utilised within its Anaerobic Digestion (AD) plant to produce renewable energy. Under the current Green Gas Support Scheme (GGSS), sugar beet pulp is classified as a dried animal feed product. To support the use of biomass into biogas and biomethane through AD, the Government should reclassify certain types of beet pulp as waste residue. If this change is made, British Sugar would seek support to be able to utilise this self-generated biogas at its operational sites, displacing current natural gas usage into its Combined Heat & Power (CHP) boilers on site, thereby also indirectly decarbonising the gas grid.
11. **Government should step up work with local authorities and Climate Change Commissions** to identify how they can be supported to take local action towards net zero. Specifically, the Government should move away from making councils entering into competitive bidding for funding which is extremely time consuming and expensive. Climate change action is urgent and local authorities would be able to get more work done if funding was made easier and simpler to apply for.
12. Given 2024 was globally the hottest year, and 2025 has already seen major climate change driven destructive weather phenomena, **it is important that there is a renewed impetus towards informing the population of the dangers of climate change and the need – and the possibility - to do something about it.** Civil society leaders – such as those that advocated charging for plastic bags – need to be encouraged. There is a key role for culture including theatre and other art forms. Increased education regarding climate change for children through schools and colleges is also essential.

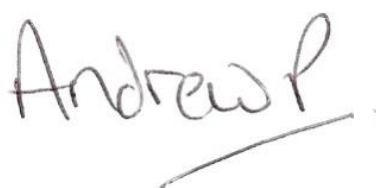
We are aware that it is only the first three of these 'asks' that are the direct responsibility of your Department and will therefore also be writing to the Secretaries of State for DEFRA, MHCLG, DfE and DfT regarding the others. That said we are sure that you will be interested to read all twelve of them as each one relates to the net zero agenda and we assume DESNZ has a role across Government to join up these issues

In conclusion, the East of England wishes to work with Government to maximise its potential to be a clean energy superpower and to help progress towards net zero. We would therefore welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how we could better do that. If your officials would like to liaise regarding finding a suitable date and time when that might happen please do contact Steve Barwick who provides the Secretariat for the Group and who has sent this letter on our behalf.

Yours sincerely



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Co-chair, East of England APPG



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**Marie Goldman MP**  
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*Email sent on behalf of the East of England APPG's Parliamentary Officers by Steve Barwick, Director, East of England APPG Secretariat*

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