

Rishi Sunak
HM Treasury
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By e-mail

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Date: 4 March 2020

Dear Rishi Sunak,

We, a coalition of local government and green groups, are writing to urge you to prioritise the environment in your first Budget, as promised in the Queen's speech, by committing to measures that will support local authorities' unique ability to deliver carbon emissions reductions at scale. Local government is ready and willing to act, with more than 240 councils across the political spectrum now having declared a 'climate emergency'.

This Budget stands at a crucial moment, ahead of the 2020 Spending Review and the UK-led COP26 in November. This is a vital opportunity for Government to show that it understands both the scale of the challenge that reaching net zero represents and the wide range of benefits it can deliver. It will not only improve air quality and lower health care costs but accelerate business and employment opportunities in a sector that has already grown by 16% from 2015 – 2018.

We do not believe that the Government's net zero target can be reached without the active empowerment and resourcing of local government. Councils' insight into local communities, their delivery of a range of relevant services, and their convening powers allow them to drive emissions reductions across their area. Collectively, they are estimated to have the ability to influence around 70% of emissions in England.

To achieve its goals, the Government needs to enable local government to take action around the green economy, retrofitting homes and workplaces, the planning system, transport, nature, climate adaptation, and waste and consumption. This will require a combination of extended local powers, supportive central government policy and direct financial support. We will work together, and with other stakeholders, to develop a comprehensive set of requests to share with government over the next few months.

We look forward to seeing recognition of local government's critical role in climate action in your Budget, and the support and resources it needs to fulfil this. We would also be keen to continue this conversation with Treasury and other departments over the coming months.

Yours,

Harriet Lamb
CEO, Ashden

Darryl Evers
President, Association
of Directors of
Environment,
Economy, Transport
and Planning

Hugh Knowles
Interim Executive
Director, Friends of
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Roz Bulleid
Interim Deputy Policy
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John Suaven
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