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**29 April 2022**

Robert Largan MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

**Re: British Energy Security Strategy**

Dear Robert,

We welcome the publication of the British Energy Security Strategy. It is clearly timely, and it is helpful that the Government has laid out its approach to our energy future. However we think that there are important elements missing, and (in the context of the recent IPCC reports) that the steps being proposed do not adequately reflect the enormity of the challenge we face if we are to avoid climate breakdown.

First, whilst the introduction refers to the possibility that by 2030, 95 percent of British electricity could be low carbon, and that by 2035 we will have decarbonised our electricity system, there is no analysis of the amount of electricity that we will require, and how that amount will be generated by the different technologies described. This is a major omission, since it is impossible to judge whether the measures proposed are adequate without an understanding of the scale of the challenge. It is of course inevitable that demand for electricity will increase substantially as we decarbonise home heating, transport and industry. Our work here in the Hope Valley (which we plan to publish later this month) suggests that by 2050 we will need 2-3 times as much as we currently consume. It would be helpful to know what the Government thinks will be the national position.

**Has the Government analysed electricity need up to 2050, and has it quantified the way in which the different electricity generating technologies will contribute to that?**

Secondly, whilst the Strategy does make reference to the need to improve the energy efficiency of our homes, and makes reference to the previously published Heat and Buildings Strategy, we believe that the steps laid out simply do not match up to the

scale of the need and the urgency of the situation. The UK has nearly 29 million homes, and the oldest housing stock in Europe. More than half were built before 1965, 20% before 1919. 65% are owner occupied. This means that we have to do more than any other European country to eliminate emissions from our homes. In this context 'improving up to 500,000 homes' is simply inadequate.

Two specific issues which we believe urgently need to be addressed are the financing of energy upgrades by home owners, and the need to increase the number of contractors who are available to undertake the work.

**What steps are the Government going to take to support home owners with the costs of retrofitting insulation, including grants for those who cannot afford to extend their mortgages?**

**What steps are the Government taking to increase the supply of assessors and contractors who are properly trained and available to carry out retrofit work?**

Thirdly, we are dismayed by the stance being taken on oil and gas. As the recent Tyndall Centre analysis, and others, have made clear, we cannot afford globally to develop any new oil or gas production if we are to constrain global temperature rises to below 1.5 degrees. We are therefore strongly opposed to any proposed new offshore or onshore fossil fuel developments, including fracking.

Fourthly, we welcome the recognition that the current electricity distribution system, and the management thereof, is not fit for purpose. Our local analysis has confirmed what others have found elsewhere, that grid connections for renewable energy installations are (under current arrangements) prohibitively expensive, and that there is currently no incentive for the Distribution Network Operators to invest in capacity. This is one of the issues that is addressed by the Local Electricity Bill, currently before Parliament. Our understanding is that at a recent meeting between Greg Hands MP, Energy Minister, and the cross party co-sponsors of the Bill there was a recognition that there is significant common ground between Government and the proposals in the Bill, and that officials are now working on ways in which the changes set out in the Bill can be implemented.

**Please will you add your support to the proposals laid out in the Bill, and write to the Energy Minister to encourage him in his efforts to implement them?**

Finally, we welcome the commitment to increased generation of electricity from renewables. This is clearly the way forward, for environmental, financial and geopolitical reasons. However we are extremely disappointed by the failure to be more ambitious regarding onshore wind. This is the fastest and cheapest way to generate renewable electricity. Public opinion supports its development, as shown both by national opinion polls as well as our own local surveying of residents' and visitors' opinions here in the Peak District. At the moment we have the absurdly undemocratic situation where one single objector can prevent an onshore wind development.

*The commitment to 'consult this year on developing local partnerships for a limited number of supportive communities who wish to host new onshore wind infrastructure in return for benefits, including lower energy bills. The consultation will consider how clear support can be demonstrated by local communities, local authorities and MPs.'* reads to us like deferring difficult decisions, at a time when bold and urgent action is needed.

**We would welcome the opportunity to share with you our surveying of local opinion on renewable energy generation here in the Hope Valley, as a way of showing that there is 'clear support.. by local communities', and discussing how the current planning constraints should be changed. Can we arrange to meet?**

Yours sincerely

Dr Jeremy Wight, Chair