



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Department for Energy Security &
Net Zero
55 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HP

Sally Barnard
South East Climate Alliance

Email: southeastclimatealliance@gmail.com

www.gov.uk

Our ref: TOB2025/11837

27 August 2025

Dear Ms Barnard and Co-Signatories,

Thank you for your email of 24 July to the Secretary of State about the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill. As I hope you will appreciate, the Secretary of State receives significant volumes of correspondence on a daily basis, and, regrettably, is unable to respond to each one personally. Therefore, I have been asked to respond, and I apologise for the delay in response.

The Government is committed to working in partnership with local places in recognition of the essential role they play in taking climate action, accelerating to net zero and supercharging our mission to deliver clean power by 2030.

Whilst there is no current overall statutory duty on climate change specifically for local authorities, and therefore little on the devolution of statutory roles for the Devolution Bill itself, we do have existing policy tools and duties that require local Government to consider and act to improve the environment, such as Local Nature Recovery Strategies and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 biodiversity duty as well as the functions set out in the wider devolution framework.

In addition, most local Governments already have ambitious net zero targets, plans and strategies, with autonomy and flexibility in how they choose to deliver relevant to the varying needs and opportunities of their local area. Central Government is keen not to prescribe, or limit, how local Government should deliver net zero. For this reason, we do not see the value in creating a new general duty to deliver net zero, climate adaptation, or contribute to delivery of the Environment Act targets.

However, we understand that local Government organisations are calling for further statutory duties in the climate change space, including the Local Government Association, who have recently consulted on a statutory duty for net zero.

The Government will continue to engage with local Government on net zero including with Mayoral Strategic Authorities, through our engagement groups, such as Roundtables with the English Mayors, and the Local Net Zero Delivery Group (LNZDG). The LNZDG was set up to strengthen our engagement between local Government on a range of net zero strategy, policy and delivery issues, and to support local Government to drive forward net zero action at the local level. We intend to hold a discussion item on a statutory duty for net zero at the next meeting of the LNZDG in the Autumn.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

A. Collins
DESNZ CORRESPONDENCE UNIT