



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP
Minister of State for Energy Security & Net
Zero

**Department for Energy Security & Net
Zero**
55 Whitehall
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The Rt Hon. Philip Dunne MP
Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee
House of Commons
London
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www.gov.uk

4 December 2023

Dear Philip,

Thank you for your letter of 16 November regarding my appearance before the Environmental Audit Committee, as well as guest members from the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee and the Energy Security and Net Zero committee, on 8th November. I am glad to read the Committee members and guests found it helpful to discuss the UK's priorities for COP28.

Thank you for setting out the issues which arose from the session, I shall provide information on these below.

Domestic and Economic Affairs (Energy, Climate and Net Zero) Cabinet Committee

It is a long established precedent that information about Cabinet and its committees, beyond what is available on gov.uk is not normally shared publicly. This includes information relating to the proceedings of Cabinet committees, including the frequency, attendance, as well as the minutes.

The release of the requested information could undermine the principle of collective agreement and the ability of Ministers to openly debate a policy decision in a confidential manner before accepting collective responsibility for a decision made at Cabinet or its committees.

This expectation is set out at section 2.3 of the Ministerial Code, which sets out that "the internal process through which a decision has been made, or the level of Committee by which it has been taken should not be disclosed".

We recognise that openness in government may increase public trust in, and engagement with, the government, however this has to be weighed against the strong public interest that policy-making and its implementation are of the highest quality. If information relating to the frequency, attendance and timings of Cabinet and Cabinet committee meetings were disclosed, this would impinge upon the confidentiality of the process of Cabinet and Cabinet committee discussions leading to worse informed and poorer decision making. This public interest has been recognised by parliament at sections 35(1)(b) and 35(5) of the Freedom of Information Act, and has been acknowledged by the courts. The Government's approach to the public interest in protecting the confidentiality of the proceedings of Cabinet and its committees has been set out at section 11.18 of the Cabinet Manual.

2030 Strategic Framework for International Climate and Nature Action

Land Use Framework and Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement

The Government will publish a Land Use Framework for England this year. The Framework will provide a long-term perspective on the land uses required to deliver growth, Net Zero, climate change adaptation, nature recovery, food security, and economic infrastructure.

The Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement is a matter for DEFRA.

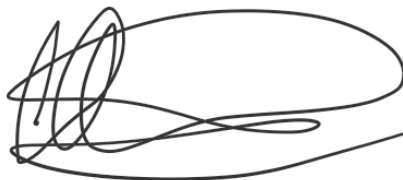
Sustainable Cooling

I attach the final Pledge commitments as well as the detailed assessment of how we meet this based on current initiatives and existing policies. The Pledge would require us to develop a cooling outlook document for the UK and provide up-to-date, transparent, and publicly available information on our policies and commitments. To do this, we would produce a cooling page on gov.uk with links to all relevant research and policies and support the dissemination of the Pledge. This coordinated view of information and policies on cooling in the UK could also enable discovery of new opportunities for innovation in delivering sustainable cooling across sectors of the economy.

Please note that the Pledge text including our detailed assessment is embargoed.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP

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