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Darren Johnson AM

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Dear Darren

Thank you for your letter and your "Lagging Behind" report. I thought the report was very good in highlighting the key issues and outlining key principles for how this should be taken forward.

As you know, I am totally committed to large-scale retrofit of Londoners' homes. We are currently developing the detailed prospectus on this, working with the LDA and the boroughs, so the points in your report are very timely.

I entirely agree with the overall thrust of the report but have also outlined my specific comments below.

Recommendation 1: I agree it would be incredibly useful to have better data on regional delivery of the Carbon Emission Reduction Target. As you are aware, the subject of delivery figures is covered in the Government's recently launched consultation on proposed amendments to the CERT. I will be responding accordingly as I hope you will also be doing.

Recommendation 2: I agree setting out the scale of carbon reductions that are planned from existing housing and a route to achieving these is important. We are assessing this as part of the home retrofit prospectus and the Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Strategy.

With regard to fuel poverty, as you are aware, delivery on any target is significantly affected by central government action in this area. The most significant part of my work on this issue is to help London improve the energy efficiency of its housing stock and to encourage those affected to take up benefits through campaigns such as the Know Your Rights campaign which I launched in January.

Recommendation 3: I totally agree with the fundamental principle that London should receive a fair share of the distribution of energy efficiency measures installed as a result of the supplier obligation, particularly because the cost of the obligation is effectively paid by every Londoner through their fuel bills. As you are aware the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) released 3 consultation documents recently related to this area and this point will be made in our response to all three. My officers will be requesting meetings with DECC officials to discuss these consultation documents and I am chasing my recent request to meet Ed Miliband.

Recommendation 4: I agree that if retrofitting your home isn't made as simple as possible, it will not be taken up by enough Londoners. This is a key element of the homes programme we are developing. The work of the Energy Saving Trust in providing advice through one telephone number for the whole of London is key and I am seeking to ensure that they are integral in any such scheme.

Recommendation 5: I understand that you have also contacted Peter Rogers on this issue. As referred to above, my team is working with the LDA and others to develop a new London wide approach, and the availability of a skilled workforce to deliver this is absolutely key. We are looking at the idea of a "Retrofit Academy" which would partly deliver this. We are also developing a broader strategy on how we can use the opportunities created by the green economy to counteract the economic downturn.

Recommendation 6: I totally agree that the area-based approach has been shown to be effective and will be a key element of the new approach. My team has also had early meetings with the Energy Saving Trust and a number of energy suppliers and will be getting into more detailed discussions in the coming months.

Recommendation 7: We are exploring opportunities for delivering solid wall insulation through both the home retrofit and low carbon zones programmes. We want to make the most out of the funding available through Community Energy Saving Programme. Because of the issues associated with different types of solid wall insulation, such as conservation areas and disruption in the home, the retrofit programme is also considering other measures for hard to treat homes such as renewable energy technologies and links to combined heat and power.

Recommendation 8: I agree that it would be valuable to encourage landlord associations to better promote existing schemes to their members. I understand that where private rented homes are referred to existing schemes the majority of them do take up measures offered for free. For the small number of cases where landlords do not take up these measures a pilot referral mechanism is being tested for London (commissioned by the GLA and Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes). I see this as a first step to encouraging boroughs to make use of their influence and powers with landlords, as appropriate.

Recommendation 9: I could not agree more that a significant increase in scale of delivery is necessary. The retrofit programme is looking at exactly how that will be achieved and what number of homes will be both ambitious and realistic in ramping up delivery in the sector. If you have any further thoughts on how we can achieve this, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Boris Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London