



Baroness Barran MBE

Parliamentary UnderSecretary of State for the School and College system
Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Your ref:
29 March 2023

Dear Participants of the Queen's Jubilee Challenge,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Higher and Further Education sectors for their contribution to the Queen's Jubilee Challenge which led to the publication of 'Accelerating the UK Tertiary Education Sector towards Net Zero'. The DfE are fully supportive of the priorities in this report for the sector to decarbonise the built environment, travel and transport and to create a sustainable supply chain.

The sector has a key role to play in green skills in connection with net zero. Indeed, it is not only what you do with your estates that will contribute to this country's transition to net zero; but also what you teach in those very same classrooms, lecture halls and laboratories. I am confident our world leading HE and FE sectors, along with industrial partners, will continue to rise to the challenge of providing leading technology, clear green skills pathways and progression routes to the green jobs needed to power this country's transition to a net zero economy.

We must prioritise action to make change and I have asked my officials to work with the sector to build on some of the recommendations. In particular;

- 1) I recognise how increasingly important the green credentials of education settings are to student choice. Therefore, I encourage FE and HE to start reporting emissions following the Standardised Carbon Emission Framework so there is transparency across the sector. I have asked my officials to work with HESA (the designated data collector for FE and HE) and UKRI to explore the feasibility of embedding the principles from the standardised emission framework into existing data collection processes, and UKRI's work on the climate impact of research, respectively.
- 2) I would like to explore, starting with Vice Chancellors in the Higher Education Sector, how the sector would like to be viewed both

domestically and internationally on its contribution to solving the climate crisis via its teaching, research and community outreach; and to understand how the sector contribution can be maximised whilst also achieving net zero.

- 3) Financing decarbonisation is a challenge that is recognised globally. I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to make sure that education settings get a fair proportion of the public sector decarbonisation scheme. This will build on the soft cap introduced in Phase 3B to ensure that at least 30% of funding went to education settings and of which over £120m was offered to education settings. Moreover, my officials are working with UKIB to run a pilot with four universities on how green bonds might work at various scales. This will plug into wider work my officials are undertaking on funding strategies for decarbonisation, energy efficiency and energy generation in the public sector.
- 4) I can announce that we are developing plans to put in place a digital hub to accelerate knowledge and action on implementing climate action plans and net zero strategies. This will work hand in hand with the National Education Nature Park, being delivered by a consortium led by the Natural History Museum. The Nature Park will initially demonstrate the biodiversity of the education estate, but eventually will show the emissions and risk to the education system at a setting level. By highlighting the status of the education system to the impacts of climate change and in parallel providing a support hub to plan and implement the change will allow us to plan strategic interventions at regional level and accelerate change.

I am sorry that I cannot be with you at the commemorative events on 28 March so I want to thank you now for your continued support in helping us to deliver the ambition in DfE's Sustainability and Climate Strategy. The FE and HE sector will be crucial in assisting His Majesty's Government to achieve the net zero target set out in the UK Net Zero Strategy.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours Faithfully,



BARONESS BARRAN
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE