

The Rt. Hon. Kwasi Kwarteng, M.P.  
Secretary of State for Business, Energy  
and Industrial Strategy  
Department for Business, Energy and  
Industrial Strategy  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

**Councillor David Rouane  
Leader of the Council**

David.Rouane@southoxon.gov.uk

Tel: 01235 422693  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Oxon  
OX14 4SB

18 October 2021

Dear Mr Kwarteng,

I am writing on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council in relation to HM Government's approach to funding the decarbonisation of leisure facilities. The council believes that the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund – as currently structured – is flawed and unable to deliver the requisite changes necessary. We are, therefore, calling for it to be reformed.

Whilst we are working hard to build proposals for project delivery, we feel that the use of competitive bidding processes for limited, ring-fenced pots of money, inhibits sensible, long-term planning regarding decarbonisation. It instead leads to local authorities and other public bodies adopting a stop/start approach which is ineffective.

Moreover, the requirements of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund discriminate against councils such as South Oxfordshire District Council which are efficient and lack the spare capacity that other local authorities/public sector organisations may have. The competitive bidding process can, therefore, put significant resource pressures on lean councils without any guarantee of reward.

In addition, the eligibility criteria of the Fund make it particularly inaccessible for local authorities whose leisure centres are operated by third-party providers. As many councils have chosen this approach to ensure the efficient management of their assets and to maximise value for money for residents, we would argue that this is particularly unfair.

South Oxfordshire District Council is, therefore, calling upon HM Government to move towards a long-term model which provides guaranteed funding for local authorities to deliver their own decarbonisation strategies. The council would contend that this would be a more effective way of achieving net zero carbon for

leisure facilities and would allow local authorities, leisure centre operators and other interested parties to plan for the future with confidence.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Rouane', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Councillor David Rouane  
Leader of the Council