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Community Energy Schemes:

I believe local energy is essential for delivering the cheaper, cleaner power we need by 2030.

Accelerating its deployment will reduce pressures on the transmission grid and strengthen local support – two of the biggest obstacles to the renewables rollout.

I therefore strongly support the development of local and community-owned renewable energy generation and supply.

Unfortunately, I am concerned that while the Government says it supports community and local energy and has now provided a modest amount of funding for the sector, it has still not introduced arrangements that will enable local power producers to trade electricity locally.

I was disappointed that it removed from the Energy Bill provisions that would have established a mechanism to allow community or smaller-scale low carbon generation schemes to sell power to local people. It also rejected amendments that would have reintroduced these provisions.

I believe that we need to do more to provide greater practical support to enable community energy to grow and play its vital role in the energy transformation.

I therefore support proposals for a Local Power Plan to provide £400 million in low-interest loans each year for community energy projects, as well as £600 million in funding for local authorities, to develop up to 8 gigawatts of cheaper, cleaner power by 2030.

This plan would bring Britain in line with European countries with high levels of distributed, community-owned power generation and would help create thousands of jobs across the country.

It would also allow a proportion of profits from local energy projects to be distributed back to local communities, so they see the benefit of clean power in direct cost of living support. It would help lower bills by billions compared to expensive fossil fuels and ensure that the wealth created from Britain's sun, wind, and waves goes directly into cutting bills for working families.

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