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Solar Power:

I believe that we need to do more to drive up rates of rooftop solar installation. According to the Climate Change Committee's latest progress report, the Government is "significantly off track" to meet its target of generating 70GW of solar capacity by 2035.

It only delivered 0.7GW of solar in 2022, which falls far short of the 4.3GW needed every year on average to meet its goal. With the bulk of solar capacity currently coming from solar panels on the ground, I believe the Government should be far more ambitious and creative about rooftop solar panels.

Rooftop solar panels are a key way in which homes can create more environmentally friendly developments, support energy security and help reach net zero targets while also bringing in a significant reduction to household energy bills. There is potential for them to be used on commercial buildings as well, such as on large warehouses along motorways which are in completely open space, but we are missing this opportunity.

I support calls to more than triple solar power by 2030, mostly by installing more rooftop solar panels, as part of plans to deliver a fossil fuel-free electricity system. I also support proposals for a Local Power Plan to provide £400 million in low interest loans each year for community energy projects, and £600 million in funding for local authorities. This could be used to expand small-scale and medium-scale projects, such as rooftop solar on social housing.

The Government says it is considering responses to a consultation it ran earlier this year on changing regulations around the requirement to submit planning applications for solar equipment, including on commercial buildings and non-domestic car parks. It has also committed to publishing a consultation later this year on new energy efficiency requirements for new builds, which is expected to come into force in 2035.

I worry that the overall pace of climate delivery remains far too slow, and I want to see bold action now. I believe Ministers need to do far better to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and take action to make the potential of solar a reality.

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