Dear Secretary of State,

**DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

On 13 February 2019, the Vale of White Horse District Council joined a growing number of other local authorities in declaring a Climate Emergency. In so doing we acknowledged the findings of the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report, which concluded that we have just 12 years to act on climate change, if global temperature rises are to be kept within the recommended 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Report made clear that to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees there is the need for rapid and far-reaching changes in our energy, land, urban and industrial systems.

While action needs to be taken at an international level to facilitate a significant reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, we believe that local authorities have an important role to play in helping to prevent catastrophic global warming. As a council, the Vale of White Horse is already delivering absolute carbon reductions, but this is not being achieved quickly enough to meet the UK’s target of an 80 per cent reduction in emissions by 2050. The council requests that HM Government provides councils with the support to facilitate further action on climate change and asks you to confirm how HM Government intends to work with local government to deliver carbon reductions.

We request also that HM Government provides details of how it intends to:
set clear standards through the building regulations for zero carbon new buildings. While we recognise the need to minimise potential restrictions on the delivery of new homes, it is important that we ensure that they are carbon neutral. Not only would this help to reduce emissions, but it would also reduce the need for expensive modifications and retrofitting in the future. The need for a transition to zero carbon new builds is an especially important consideration in the Vale of White Horse due to the recent level of housing development within the district.

facilitate the urgent retrofit of existing homes. As you will be aware The Institution of Engineering and Technology in their 2018 report Scaling Up Retrofit 2050 concluded that we need to ‘deep retrofit’ almost every old home in the UK in order to meet our climate change targets. This will require substantial long-term planning and investment from both central and local government.

provide local government with increased support for electric vehicle charging infrastructure including on street charging. The target for all new vehicles to be electric by 2040 will require a major increase in the number of charging points. While we may be able to facilitate this in new developments through planning conditions, in existing settlements and the rural parts of the district, additional assistance would be needed to facilitate the transition from fossil-fuelled transport to electric. We also request details of how you intend to engage with utility companies to ensure the national network can accommodate the demands of increased need for electricity whether at peak or non-peak times.

review and simplify the regulatory framework to allow councils to maximise use of their assets for electricity generation and battery storage.

I trust these suggestions will assist you in your deliberations and we would welcome your response to these issues.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Cox