

Lee Waters AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref LW/11781/21

Mark Drakeford MS  
Member of the Senedd for Cardiff West  
Senedd Cymru  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA  
mark.drakeford@senedd.wales

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Dear Mark,

Thank you for your email of 11 October to Julie James MS Minister for Climate Change, regarding a letter you have received from the St. Fagans Community Council in relation to the energy efficiency of new houses in Wales. I am responding as Building Regulations falls within my portfolio.

Our climate change and carbon budgeting responsibilities mean we need to take every opportunity to reduce our existing emissions. As new homes being built today will exist in 2050, it is important for the impact of new development to be minimised which is why the Welsh Government has recently reviewed Part L (Conservation of fuel and power) of the Building Regulations in relation to new housing.

Last year the Welsh Government set out Building regulation proposals to introduce a significant uplift in energy efficiency standards for all new homes. The Government response was published earlier this year which sets out the decision to introduce a 37% reduction in carbon emissions for new dwellings (compared with current standards) to be implemented from 2022. This could save homeowners £180 a year on energy bills (based on a semi-detached home), and in addition, all new homes will need to be future-proofed, to make it easier to retrofit low carbon heating systems.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Lee.Waters@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Lee.Waters@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The 37% reduction is intended as a stepping stone towards the next Part L changes in 2025 where it is expected that new homes should produce a minimum of 75% less CO2 emissions than ones built to current requirements.

Further details on the consultation and Government response can be found on the following web link: <https://gov.wales/building-regulations-part-l-review-0>

The letter you received from the St. Fagans Community Council mentions three areas of potential improvement for new build homes; underfloor heating, solar energy and air/ground source heat systems.

In relation to air/ground source heat pumps, our vision for the Part L 2025 standard is designed to shift to low-carbon heat sources for heating and hot water. This means that new buildings constructed to the standard will be able to become carbon neutral over time as the electricity grid and heat networks decarbonise. To meet higher standards, industry will need to develop the necessary supply chains, skills and construction practices to deliver low-carbon heat, and highly energy efficient new homes. Therefore, the early warning of the 2025 standard is important to allow industry to gear up both the capacity and skills to deliver low carbon solutions at volume.

With regard to solar energy, Part L of the Building Regulations is in general, technology and fuel neutral so we do not prescribe or prohibit any particular form of heating or energy generation, the intention being flexibility in meeting energy targets so as not to act as a barrier to innovation. The Part L 2022 proposals do not, therefore, mandate a particular technology (such as solar PV), we do however recognise that in raising our mandatory energy targets there is likely to be an increasing role for renewable energy technologies as they become more cost effective.

For example, the proposed 37% reduction to be implemented in 2022 includes solar PV within the notional building specification which sets the energy target. This in turn would then encourage the use of renewable energy in new dwellings.

Underfloor heating is also not mandated as a particular technology, however the 2022 proposals will require that all new homes will need to be future-proofed to make it easier to retrofit low carbon heating systems. If developers choose not to install low-carbon heating to comply with the proposed 2022 standard, then any wet space heating systems should still be designed to operate with a flowrate temperature of 55°C or lower in the final heating circuit, to make it easier to retrofit low carbon heating systems.

National planning policy, as set in Planning Policy Wales (PPW), complements the building regulations by supporting the development of renewable energy. PPW requires all local planning authorities to consider the opportunities for renewable energy including opportunities for an Energy Report for major developments which identifies opportunities for energy conservation and appropriate renewable energy technologies. Furthermore, the consideration of district heating systems and the location of future development to minimise energy consumption will be factors to consider in Cardiff's LDP review. We have also amended Permitted Development Rights which means that most domestic scale solar panels do not require planning consent for local planning authorities.

In relation to standards for affordable housing schemes funded by Welsh Government, on 17 August the Minister for Climate Change launched the “Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 - Creating Beautiful Homes and Places”. This bold new standard will significantly improve energy efficiency in these homes and reduce carbon emissions by requiring higher fabric standards and moving away from the use of fossil fuels for heating and hot water. Further decarbonisation of the electricity grid and the use of onsite renewable energy with energy storage and intelligent controls we believe will lead to the net zero carbon homes we are aiming for. Further details on the standard (which came into force on 1 October 2021) can be accessed via the web link below.

<https://gov.wales/development-quality-requirements-housing-associations-and-local-authorities-2021>

On 28 October we published ‘Net Zero Wales’ ahead of the climate summit, COP26, being held in Glasgow. The Plan sets out how we will meet our second carbon budget (2021 to 2025) including the actions to reduce emissions from residential buildings. The plan contains the proposed future actions (which require further development) for the longer term. It also sets out the wider actions to be taken by others, our calls on UK Government and contains pledges made by our partners from across Wales.

[Net Zero Wales | GOV.WALES](#)

I hope the above information demonstrates the importance that the Welsh Government places on sustainability and the need to reduce emissions in new housing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', with a long vertical stroke extending upwards from the top of the 'l'.

**Lee Waters AS/MS**

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