

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig

Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

John Griffiths AC / AM

Chair

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

December 2016

Dear John

Your letter of 30 September addressed to Carl Sargeant AM, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, regarding the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee meeting on 21 September, has been passed to me to reply to in relation to the Building Regulations Part L query, which falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

The commitment to a further review of Part L was made in 2013 under the last administration. It is my intention, once the current building regulations sustainability review is complete, to turn my attention to Part L building on the changes introduced in 2014. I anticipate this work will start towards the middle of 2017.

Our Part L activities currently centre on the EU Energy Performance in Buildings Directive 2010 (Recast) and the requirement to set standards at a cost optimal level or better. The European Commission report into the cost optimality of member state standards (based on 2010 standards) was published in Parliament 10 October 2016. At the time of assessment (2012), it indicated the UK standards, taken as a whole, were at cost optimal levels or better.

Analysis of our current energy efficiency standards (Part L 2014) is currently being prepared for the second report on cost optimality. This will inform how our standards may have to change if required to meet the EU Directive requirement for 'nearly zero energy' new buildings by 2020 (2018 for the public sector). At this point in time, the Directive requirement to ensure new buildings occupied and owned by public authorities are nearly zero energy' by the end of 2018 remains binding.

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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.

Looking at energy and emissions more broadly, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets a legal target of reducing emissions by a minimum of 80% of baseline levels by 2050 and places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to set a series of interim targets (for 2020, 2030 and 2040) and carbon budgets. A report must be published for each budgetary period setting out the proposals and policies for meeting the carbon budget for every period.

The built environment sector is an area where I want to see further decarbonisation, however, in doing this we need to also recognise the economic importance of providing additional homes in Wales. Raising standards must be done in a cost effective way, and we will work with the industry to ensure we balance the need to reduce energy use in new housing with the need to meet new housing demand.

Whilst progressively raising required standards of performance is important, efforts also need to be directed at ensuring what is built matches what is designed. Work by the Zero Carbon Hub has identified a gap between design and as-built energy performance. (Further information can be found on the following weblink: <http://www.zerocarbonhub.org/current-projects/performance-gap>). We will continue to engage with the house building industry over efforts to reduce such gaps.

Regards

Lesley

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