



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Patrick Harvie MSP,  
Minister for Zero Carbon  
Buildings, Active Travel  
and Tenants' Rights  
By email only

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
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29 September 2023

Dear Patrick,

**Building (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023 (SSI 2023/177)**

Thank you for the evidence you submitted to the Committee on the above Regulations.

Further to that session and the stakeholder roundtable that immediately preceded your session, there were a number of issues that members wished to follow-up with you.

Firstly, one of the key challenges to delivering on zero direct emissions heating technologies will be around ensuring that we have the workforce in place to install and then maintain such technologies. The Committee would welcome further information from you on your work with Skills Development Scotland on the apprenticeship programme and the funding you are providing through the Energy Savings Trust for apprenticeships. The Committee would also welcome further information on how you are supporting small and medium size enterprises to transition to installing these new technologies.

The Committee also recognises that the challenge of transitioning to zero direct emissions heating technologies will be more acute in rural, island and remote areas. The Committee would welcome further information on what is being done to:

- develop grid capacity,
- support rural house providers and developers,
- ensure back-up solutions are in place in case of emergencies.

It has been suggested to the Committee that the requirement to have zero direct emissions heating technologies will slow down the delivery of housing by both social housing providers and private house builders. The Committee would welcome being kept updated on what impact these new requirements have on new housing numbers.

It was also suggested to the Committee that there needs to be a change in the culture of planning departments to respond to these new requirements, ensuring that planning decisions do not undermine the capacity to deliver zero direct emissions heating technologies. The Committee would welcome further information on how planning departments are being supported to respond to these new requirements.

The Committee's focus has been primarily on domestic properties. The Committee would welcome, however, further reflections on the impact this will have on conversions of non-domestic buildings and what support will be provided for this purpose. During the evidence session your officials mentioned about the technical guidance they were preparing to accompany the Regulations. The Committee would welcome sight of that guidance to better understand the narrow scope of conversions the Regulations will apply to.

Finally, although more directly concerned with the retrofitting of existing properties, the Committee would welcome an update on the Scottish Government's dialogue with the UK Government about the payment of VAT in relation to retrofitting.

I would be grateful of a response by 25 October.

Yours sincerely,

Ariane Burgess  
Convener, Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee