

Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change

Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Climate Change

28 June 2022

Dear Julie and Lee,

Additional questions following the 15 June 2022 Ministerial scrutiny session

Thank you for attending the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee ('the Committee') meeting on 15 June 2022. Following the meeting, the Committee agreed I should write to ask you to address a number of matters that were not reached during the scrutiny session.

Decarbonisation of housing

In responding to the Climate Change Committee's 2020 Progress Report: Reducing Emissions in Wales, the Welsh Government committed to publishing "a roadmap to building net zero carbon new social homes" in July 2021.

1. Could you share details of the roadmap with the Committee?

During the first phase of our inquiry into decarbonisation of housing, we sought the views of stakeholders on progress made towards decarbonising existing social homes. While supportive of the Optimised Retrofit Programme ('ORP'), stakeholders explained that, under the ORP, Registered Social Landlords ('RSLs') have to compete for funding. They emphasised the need for a rolling programme to support decarbonisation across the sector.

2. Can you clarify whether the Welsh Government intends to move to a rolling programme of funding to support RSLs to in delivering its ambition for the sector to decarbonise by 2033? If so, what timeline are you working towards?

The [Better Homes, Better Wales, Better World](#) report called for the Welsh Government to find a financial solution for traditional RSLs who do not currently receive Welsh Housing Quality Standard

(‘WHQS’) resources to enable them to meet the stretching targets for the social housing sector recommended in the report.

3. Can you provide details of funding available to traditional RSLs to support them in decarbonising their existing housing stock?

In your [letter](#), dated 7 April, 2022 you told us the ‘testing and learning’ approach adopted through the ORP “will provide the springboard to rapidly start the decarbonising of homes in other tenures by 2023”. Stakeholders suggested that two or three years of data would be needed from the ORP in order for “real learning” to take place.

4. How confident are you that sufficient learning from ORP will have taken place by 2023 to start the decarbonising of homes in other tenures?

Although the focus of our inquiry is decarbonisation of existing housing stock, we are also interested in how the Welsh Government is working to ensure that homes built today support the delivery of Wales’ 2050 net zero target.

5. Can you provide an update on the steps the Welsh Government has taken, and plans to take, to ensure that new homes (across housing sectors) are built to zero carbon in operation standards?

Proposed ban on single use plastics

The Committee has previously written to you about the exclusion from the UK Internal Market Act 2020 (‘UKIMA’) for single use plastics. In your [response](#), dated 31 May 2022, you confirmed that the dispute resolution procedure was used with a view to securing an exclusion that was wider in scope than the one agreed.

6. Given that both the Scottish and Welsh Governments expressed disappointment at the narrow nature of the exclusion, how satisfied are you that the dispute resolution procedure has been effective in this instance?

Both you and the Counsel General have previously given a commitment to notify relevant committees/the Senedd of disputes arising under the various Common Frameworks that reach Ministerial level. No formal notification was received in relation to the dispute.

7. Can you clarify whether the dispute reached Ministerial level? If so, why did you not notify this Committee/the Senedd?

The Committee was first made aware of the UK Government’s decision to grant the exclusion on 28 March 2022. In your letter, dated 31 May 2022, you told us you had “now received a letter from Minister Prentice of the UK Government seeking the formal consent from Welsh Ministers [to make regulations to give effect to the exclusion] (as required by UKIMA) which I intend to give”.

8. Can you explain why you chose not to seek the Senedd's views on the exclusion prior to giving consent to the making of *The United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 (Exclusions from Market Access Principles: Single-Use Plastics) Regulations 2022*?

You have told the Committee that, as well as the single use plastic items listed in the Welsh Government's July 2020 consultation, you also propose to ban the sale of wet wipes which contain plastic and single use plastic carrier bags. You said your officials are "currently undertaking a rapid evidence review and they are engaging with stakeholders on the inclusion of these additional measures".

9. Can you provide a list of stakeholder your officials are engaging with? When will the review be completed and will you commit to publishing the outcome?

COP15 and biodiversity

The Terms of Reference for the Biodiversity Deep Dive ('the Deep Dive') state "the outcomes of the review will be announced in a Ministerial Statement ahead of summer recess". However, you subsequently told us the Deep Dive panel will "make the initial recommendations at a conference just after summer recess".

10. Can you clarify when the outcome of the Deep Dive will be made available?

In your letter, dated 25 May 2022, you told us you had "put forward Wales' position strongly to Defra in relation to the latest draft of the 2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) to inform the development of a UK position". Although we questioned you on this issue during our recent scrutiny session, there remains a lack of clarity about the Welsh Government's position.

11. Can you provide further details of the Welsh Government's position on the latest draft of the 2020 global biodiversity framework?

12. COP15 has now been put back to December 2022. What impact will this have on the Welsh Government's plans in this policy area, including the development of statutory biodiversity targets?

During the meeting, you committed:

- to provide details on the uptake of Leasing Scheme Wales by local authority area and the number of properties within each local authority area that are known to be failing to meet regulatory standards, and
- to seek the UK Government's agreement to share its settled negotiating position in relation to the draft 2020 GBF with the Committee.

I should be grateful if you would respond as soon as possible, and by 26 July 2022 at the latest.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Llyr', is centered on a light yellow rectangular background.

Llyr Gruffydd MS,
Chair, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg./ We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament