

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Llyr Gruffydd MS
Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee
Senedd Cymru
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25 October 2023

Dear Llyr,

Further to the Minister for Climate Change's letter of 1 September, which responded to the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee Report on the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill, I am writing to update you on recommendations 26 & 27.

The Summary of Responses document to our consultation entitled 'Reducing Emissions from Domestic Solid Fuel Burning' has been published and can be found [here](#).

The responses to the consultation highlighted positive support for our policy ambition to restrict the sale of solid fuels and improve air quality in Wales. I have instructed officials to gather further evidence, undertake an impact assessment and develop policy with a view to regulations being made under section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 to come into force in Autumn 2025.

It is likely that we will have a transition period associated with any solid fuel bans or restrictions to allow suppliers to deplete existing stocks. Alongside development of the regulations, we will collaborate with public bodies and industry to produce communication materials which will inform businesses and public bodies about the new rules. Many respondents highlighted that communication would be key to a successful transition.

I will be looking at how we can support both local authorities to enforce the regulations, and households in the transition away from a reliance on solid fuels or a desire for aesthetic burning. This approach is supported in the draft [Heat Strategy for Wales](#) which outlines our ambitions to transition to low carbon heating.

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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.

For ease of reference, a table listing the responses to each question within the consultation is in the Annex below.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Lee Waters AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

Reducing Emissions from Domestic Burning of Solid Fuels Consultation Table of Responses

Question	Response
1. Do you agree that we should phase out the use of bituminous/traditional house coal for domestic/residential burning?	We will bring in legislation to ban the sale of bituminous house coal in domestic settings.
2. What do you consider is a reasonable transition period to allow industry and householders to use up existing stock?	We aim to provide a transition period and will agree the duration during the development of the regulations.
3. In the event of a ban, we would need to ensure that bituminous/traditional house coal products are prevented from being marketed as “smokeless” or “low smoke” fuels?	We will explore the practicalities of adopting the Ready to Burn scheme, or something similar, in Wales.
4. In order to comply with any proposal to phase out bituminous/traditional house coal what adjustment, if any, would your business need to make?	We will take on board the information provided in response to the question.
5. What support might you require to make these adjustments?	We will engage further with coal suppliers across Wales to better understand the support required. This includes understanding the implications of different approaches for disseminating information to individual households on cost-effective and less polluting alternatives to coal.
6. Do you agree that we are taking appropriate steps in view of the need to reduce our carbon emissions?	The domestic combustion sector is not the largest emitter of CO ₂ but addressing these emissions is one of a wide range of measures we are putting in place to achieve our statutory climate targets set by the Senedd in 2021.
7. If you have any further comments or suggestions on this section, please provide them here.	We will take key themes from this response into account in the development of the regulations.
8. We are considering a minimum volume for the sale of wet wood to householders. We are proposing that this is set at 2m ³ , but we are inviting your views on this point. Please indicate what limit you think this should be set at.	We will be placing a limit on the sales of wet wood in Wales and the volume will be determined during the development of the regulations. We will take the themes from this question into account.
9. Do you think that suppliers and retailers should be given a transition period to sell existing stocks of wet wood?	We aim to provide a transition period and will agree the duration during the development of the regulations.
10. If so, how long should any transition period be?	We will involve work closely with the wood supply industry during any transition period.

<p>11. Do you agree that wood fuel suppliers should be required to be members of a certification scheme that provides assurance (via testing and auditing) that the wood is of a moisture content of 20% or less?</p>	<p>We will liaise with Defra about the possibility of aligning with the Ready to Burn scheme.</p> <p>We will develop a campaign to accompany any regulations.</p>
<p>12. Do you agree that retailers selling wood should be legally required to store the wood in such a way that it will maintain at least the stated moisture content?</p>	<p>Any scheme certifying wood sales would require some form of legal enforcement and we will clarify to whom the rules apply when aligning to any certification scheme.</p> <p>We will engage further with relevant stakeholders during the development of the regulations.</p>
<p>13. Alternatively, would you welcome a campaign to provide guidance to both retailers and households on how best to store both wet and dry wood, and how long to store to ensure it is seasoned properly?</p>	<p>We intend to collaborate with all appropriate stakeholders and delivery partners to develop an information campaign, engaging with suppliers, retailers and households.</p>
<p>14. Do you feel Welsh Government should treat kiln dried wood differently to naturally dried wood or treat both types equally?</p>	<p>We will take the responses into consideration with Defra and the other administrations to establish consensus and a way forward.</p>
<p>15. Should the sale of wet wood to domestic properties be treated differently in rural as opposed to urban settings?</p>	<p>We will apply a consistent approach throughout Wales.</p>
<p>16. If you are a supplier/retailer, how would these proposals affect your business?</p>	<p>We will engage further with relevant stakeholders to ensure any regulation of the sale of wood is managed in a way that is sensitive to the needs of business, whilst preventing potential harm caused by the storing and burning wood inappropriately.</p>
<p>17. What support might you require to make these adjustments?</p>	<p>See response to question 16.</p>
<p>18. If you have any further comments or suggestions on this section, please provide them here.</p>	<p>We acknowledge the need to raise awareness of the impacts of solid fuel burning, particularly within urban communities. We will develop communications to support householders in their transition to cleaner fuels.</p>
<p>19. Do you agree that we should introduce a standard for all manufactured mineral solid fuels which confirms they are below 2% sulphur and meet a smoke emissions limit of 5g/hr?</p>	<p>We intend to develop regulations to apply this standard to all fuels used in a domestic setting.</p>
<p>20. In order to comply with any proposal to apply sulphur and smoke emissions standards to all manufactured mineral solid fuels,</p>	<p>With the support of industry, we will introduce this standard in Wales and work together to bring forward regulations.</p>

what adjustment, if any, would your business need to make?	
21. Would you agree that the Welsh Government should seek to endorse the Sustainable Fuel Register, or seek to adopt a similar scheme, for application in Wales?	Further investigation is required before endorsing a scheme such as the Sustainable Fuel Register.
22. Would you agree that any registration scheme for manufactured biomass solid fuels covering Wales should be expanded to include testing and certification for PM and other emissions?	We will work with UK Government and other administrations to consider amendment of the requirements of such a scheme to address Particulate Matter alongside CO ₂ and other emissions.
23. If you have any further comments or suggestions on the sections on manufactured fuels, please provide them here.	We will consider comments going forward.
24. Accepting that regular maintenance by qualified professionals improves the efficiency of any appliances, do you agree that an appropriately qualified technician (installers, service engineers and sweeps) should be trained and certified to enable them to give environmental guidance and condemn dangerous appliances?	We will develop a communications campaign to demonstrate best practice for solid fuel use and this will include the importance of regular maintenance by a trained professional.
25. In regions of France a chimney must be swept annually by a registered and qualified sweep otherwise in the event of a fire caused by the stove the home insurance will not be valid. Would you agree that this approach should be adopted in Wales?	Insurance services are not devolved to Wales and any initiative such as the regular maintenance of appliances and chimneys as a condition of household insurance would need to be introduced by UK Government. We strongly advocate regular maintenance of appliances and flues chimneys and will provide guidance on safe ways of doing this.
26. Would you consider some form of scrappage scheme to be an appropriate method to encourage the replacement of inefficient appliances currently in use?	Our 'Heat Strategy for Wales' supports the need for enabling actions to provide homeowners with advice and support for the transition to low carbon heat. Along with other initiatives within the strategy, we propose to prioritise low carbon heat as part of the next iteration of the Warm Homes Programme to support households in fuel poverty in owner-occupied and private rented homes.
27. Should any scrappage scheme be limited to households where the burning of solid fuels is the primary heat source, or should this be expanded to encourage people to use non-carbon heating?	See response to question 26.

<p>28. While it is presently outside the scope of the Welsh Government to set taxation rates would you support a proposal to explore a lower VAT rate on domestic fire and stove maintenance to encourage householders to maintain their appliances regularly?</p>	<p>A number of respondents made the valid point that lower VAT rates might encourage installation of wood burners. This unintended consequence would be counter-productive to our policy ambition to transition to low-carbon, more efficient heating sources.</p> <p>Therefore, we will not be taking forward this proposal.</p>
<p>29. Do you have a preference for any of the options for supporting households to change, outlined above?</p>	<p>As outlined in question 26, proposals to support households in the transition to low-carbon heating sources, will be captured in the Heat Strategy for Wales.</p>
<p>30. Would you agree that the coverage of smoke control areas should increase in order to better manage emissions from domestic burning?</p>	<p>We will be producing smoke control guidance as part of the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill and will be encouraging local authorities to consider new smoke control areas as part of their holistic approach to local air quality.</p>
<p>31. If so in your opinion what additional coverage would be appropriate?</p>	<p>Consultation feedback on the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill highlighted the need for proportionate action and a need to gather further evidence on the distinction between urban and rural areas in relation to smoke control.</p>
<p>32. Do you agree that the Welsh Government should consider available options to regulate the types of appliance and fuels that can be used in outdoor settings?</p>	<p>Based on the mixed response to this question, our focus will be on reducing emissions from the more regular practice of indoor domestic combustion.</p>
<p>33. We would like to know your views on the effects that reducing emissions from domestic burning will have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh.</p>	<p>We are committed to supporting the Welsh language and culture as we develop future policy and communication tools to support air quality improvements.</p>
<p>34. What effects do you think there would be? How could the positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?</p>	<p>As outlined in question 33.</p>
<p>35. Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.</p>	<p>As outlined in question 33.</p>
<p>36. We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues that we have not</p>	<p>Our 'Heat Strategy for Wales' will support our ambition to improve air quality and provide support for householders to</p>

specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.	transition to low carbon ways of heating their homes.
37. Do you agree that we should stop using house coal and wet wood for heating our homes and businesses?	Our responses to questions 1-18 are reinforced by the comments received in this easy read question.
38. How long do you think we should give people and industry to stop using house coal and wet wood?	Our responses to questions 2, 9 and 10 are reinforced by the comments received in this easy read question.