

Cabinet Secretary for Housing
Rùnaire a'Chaibineit airson Taigheadas
Màiri McAllan MSP
Màiri NicAilein BPA

Ariane Burgess MSP
Convener
Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By email:
localgov.committee@parliament.scot

CC: Edward Mountain
Email: netzero.committee@parliament.scot

18 November 2025

Dear Arianne,

The Scottish Government is committed to decarbonising heat in buildings by 2045, a commitment reaffirmed in our draft Climate Change Plan published on 6 November. We have made significant progress towards this target, including legislating for clean heat in new homes and supporting the growth of heat networks.

We had intended to build on this by introducing the Buildings (Heating and Energy Performance) and Heat Networks (Scotland) Bill (formerly known as the “Heat in Buildings Bill”) in this session. However, it has become clear that proceeding now would not allow the Scottish Parliament to consider the Bill in the context of emerging UK-wide developments.

This is particularly the case in respect of the forthcoming UK Warm Homes Plan and ongoing work on energy market reform. I am expecting the Warm Homes Plan to set out crucial detail on how and to what extent the UK Government plans to rebalance energy prices, particularly the price of electricity relative to gas, in a way that will make clean heating systems more affordable to run.

This is a critical part of ensuring that our work to decarbonise homes does not exacerbate fuel poverty – something I am particularly committed to ensuring at a time when more and more people are struggling with spiralling energy costs and debt.

I am disappointed that the Warm Homes Plan has been delayed so considerably. As well as continuing to develop the policy content of the Bill and consider associated costs, I have been pressing successive UK Ministers in recent months to publish the Warm Home Plan or at least share its content vis-à-vis electricity prices. This, regrettably, has not materialised.

There is no longer time in the Parliamentary term to introduce the Bill and nor would I ask the Scottish Parliament to consider such an important and complicated Bill without a full understanding of the policy context across the UK which we understand is likely to emerge before the end of the year. Doing so would not be pragmatic for consumers and would risk misalignment and confusion for business.

As such, I am confirming today that the Scottish Government will not introduce a Heat in Buildings Bill during this Parliamentary session. Instead, I have today published our draft Bill, with a clear statement of intent to introduce it as early as possible in the next Parliament (subject to the outcome of the 2026 Scottish Parliament election).

Ultimately, it is perverse that Scottish Ministers should be in the dark about plans related to Scotland's own energy resources. If we had all the powers of a normal country – including over our own energy resources and market – we would not be in this position. Nonetheless, our obligation to make good law for the people of Scotland, particularly when this relates so closely to the vexed issue of energy bills, is paramount and therefore we shall await clarity on the UK Government position before proceeding.

In the meantime, we are determined to continue to press ahead with our existing decarbonisation agenda including developing Heat Networks as a significant investment proposition and viable heating source for households. Therefore, I am pleased to confirm that that we are introducing grant support for homeowners to enable connections to heat networks through our long running Home Energy Scotland Grant and Loan scheme, reinforcing our commitment to meeting our targets for heat network deployment. This will see grants of up to £9,000 together with loans, for households in island and remote rural areas to connect to local district heat networks.

I hope that you and your colleagues will take the time to consider the documents we have published today. I am grateful to you and other members of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee for your continued engagement on this matter, and I would be happy to speak further about our plans at Committee.

I am copying in Edward Mountain MSP, Convener of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee, to ensure the Committee is informed and aware.

Yours sincerely,

MÀIRI MCALLAN
Cabinet Secretary for Housing