



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Finlay Carson MSP
Convener of Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural
Environment Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

(rural.committee@parliament.scot)

25 January 2023

Dear Convener,

At the Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee meeting on 11 January you asked about the impact of our plans to decarbonise heat on Scotland's rural and island communities. As the Minister with portfolio responsibility, I am responding.

As we set out in our [Heat in Buildings Strategy](#), we need to reduce emissions from homes and non-domestic buildings by 68% by 2030 as compared to 2020. To meet our climate targets, we estimate that over one million existing homes need to switch to a zero direct emissions heating (ZDEH) system by 2030, and the remainder by 2045. As well as contributing to climate change, poorly insulated homes and our reliance on fossil fuel heating also leaves households and business exposed to significant energy cost increases.

As such, we are committed to introducing regulations (where possible within our legal competence) to require that all homes meet a minimum energy efficiency level equivalent to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C by 2033, and are prohibited from using direct emissions heating (and cooling) systems by 2045. We plan to introduce such requirements from 2025 and are developing approaches to phasing in these regulations across the housing stock. We want this approach to be fair and to make it as easy and affordable as possible for people to replace their heating systems at appropriate points in time.

We will consult on our proposals in the coming year – this will include consulting on the circumstances in which we will require people to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and make changes to their heating systems.

The technologies we need to install to meet our climate targets are well-established and include heat pumps and heat networks. In circumstances where these are not technically feasible, alternatives technologies can be adopted. Research commissioned by the Scottish

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot



Government to [assess the suitability of low carbon heating technologies in residential buildings](#) highlighted that the vast majority of homes off the gas grid would be suitable for a heat pump where homes were able to adopt energy efficiency improvements required to meet EPC C. For the minority of homes where a heat pump is not viable, alternative options could include other forms of electric heating, or in limited circumstances, sustainably sourced bioenergy.

We are allocating at least £1.8 billion over the course of this Parliament to accelerate deployment of heat and energy efficiency measures and to support those least able to pay, including those living in rural and island communities. We offer a broad range of delivery programmes to provide advice and financial support for households and businesses related to energy efficiency, renewable heating and fuel poverty support in Scotland. This package of support will evolve over the course of the decade to meet the scale of change required and align with any regulations we introduce.

Delivery programmes:

- **Home Energy Scotland (HES)** provides free bespoke, impartial advice on in-depth support to householders on low and zero emissions heating technologies, other domestic renewables and more complex energy efficiency improvements.
- The HES service also acts as a referral scheme for Scotland's flagship fuel poverty scheme, **Warmer Homes Scotland**, which provides grants to households living in or at risk of fuel poverty to install insulation and heating systems in their homes.
- The **Home Energy Scotland Grant and Loan** scheme provides grant funding of up to £7,500 for heat pumps, with an additional £7,500 of funding available as an optional interest free loan. There is an uplift of £1,500 to both the heat pump and energy efficiency grants for rural and island homes, meaning rural households can claim up to £18,000 in grant funding compared to £15,000 in non-rural areas. This scheme will make it easier for people to access funding to help ensure their homes are more energy efficient and use climate friendly-heating.
- Our **Area Based Schemes** provide annual capital funding to every Local Authority to fund delivery of energy efficiency and heating/renewables measures in areas with high levels of fuel poverty. Councils can apply for an uplift for rural and island areas to help meet higher delivery costs in these areas.
- The Scottish Government is also providing support to some of Scotland's more remote and rural off-grid communities through the **Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES)**. Support is available to help off-grid communities upgrade their energy systems and decarbonise their energy supplies and communities can also access support to decarbonise their community buildings and reduce energy bills via the *Let's Do Net Zero: Community Buildings Fund*.

We are committed to a just transition to net zero, which means working with people, businesses and communities across Scotland to ensure they can access support and advice, and that the costs and benefits of the transition are spread fairly. As such, we will invite key stakeholders representing rural and island communities to contribute towards our consultation on proposals for introducing legislation for ZDEH. Before introducing any regulation, we will assess the impacts of our proposals on rural and island communities through an Island Community Impact Assessment and an Equality Impact Assessment.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Accredited
Until 2020



I hope that the committee finds this information helpful and look forward to future engagement with you on this important topic.

Yours sincerely,



PATRICK HARVIE

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



Accredited
Until 2020

