Dear Bob

I am writing to you as Convener of the Local Government and Communities Committee to advise you that the Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 26 June and published on 27 June on the Scottish Parliament website: http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108916.aspx.

This Government believed that eradicating fuel poverty is crucial to achieving a fairer, socially just and sustainable Scotland. That is why we have brought forward this landmark piece of legislation, to set out our commitment to ending fuel poverty and tackling inequalities. We are proud of this legislation. Scotland is one of the few countries to define fuel poverty, let alone set such a challenging target to reduce it.

This Bill will achieve three key things – it will set a new target for fuel poverty; introduce a new definition, recommended by experts, that will ensure we focus our support on those who need it most, no matter where in Scotland they live; and mandate the publication of a new long-term fuel poverty strategy. These are all proposals that our expert advisers and relevant stakeholder groups have said are required, and that we are delivering.

An easy to read guide to the Bill can be found here: www.gov.scot/isbn/9781787810372.

In addition to the Fuel Poverty Bill, a draft fuel poverty strategy for Scotland 2018 has also been published today http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06/2306.
The draft strategy sets out more information on the actions we are taking to drive progress towards achieving the ambitious target in the Fuel Poverty Bill and how we intend to monitor progress. The actions outlined will be consulted on and reflected in a final version of the strategy which is to be published once the Bill is in force – this will include taking account of the views of our expert advisory groups. I’m confident that Scotland will have the most robust and universally recognised strategy to reduce fuel poverty that has ever been brought forward.

A suite of Impact Assessments have been prepared to support the Bill and the Strategy. They can be found on the following links:

Equalities Impact Assessment:  
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06/7698

Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment:  
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06/7279

Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment:  
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06/8976

Health Impact Assessment:  
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06/5802

There will of course be opportunities to discuss the contents of the Bill as it is considered by the Parliament and I look forward to working with everyone, including this Committee, to end fuel poverty.

I am also copying this letter to the Conveners of other related committees.

Kind regards

KEVIN STEWART

cc. Convener of the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee  
Convener of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee  
Convener of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee  
Convener of the Social Security Committee  
Convener of the Health and Sport Committee  
Convener of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee