

Huw Irranca-Davies MS

Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Julie James MS

Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning

8 May 2024

Dear Huw and Julie,

### **Impact of the WHQS2023 on local authorities' ability to reach net zero by 2030**

At its meeting on 24 April 2024, the Committee noted correspondence from Councillor Joanna Protheroe, Chair of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee (the Scrutiny Committee) relating to the impact of the WHQS23 on local authorities' ability to reach net zero by 2030.

The correspondence suggests there is a lack of clarity around when the social housing sector is expected to meet EPC A, about the Welsh Government's ambition for a net zero public sector by 2030, and how these align for local authorities with housing stock.

The Committee agreed I should write to you to seek clarification on these matters.

In its letter, the Scrutiny Committee refers to "a change in the target date from **2030 to 2034** for public sector homes to reach net zero" arising from "the pushing back of the latest Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) four years from 2030 to 2034 to reach the latest Energy Efficiency EPC level for all public sector homes".

It is our understanding that the Welsh Government's original proposal was for all social housing to achieve EPC A by 2033. The WHQS23 sets out that all homes must meet a minimum standard of EPC C by 2030 and that EPC A must be achieved, although it does not specify when.

1. Can you clarify whether and, if so when, the Welsh Government has committed to a target for all social housing to reach EPC A by 2030? If a 2030 target was set, and has since been revised, can you explain the reasons for this?
2. Can you clarify by when you expect all social homes to achieve EPC A?



3. What assessment has been made of the impact of the standard for energy efficiency on the ability of local authorities with housing stock to meet the Welsh Government's ambition for a net zero public sector by 2030?

I would like to raise another issue, which came to light during initial consideration of this matter. The introductory chapter of the WHQS23 states:

"The Senedd Cymru/ Welsh Parliament is committed to bringing all existing social housing up to this new Standard by 2034 (elements in Part 3 may be reached at different times)."

The reference to Senedd Cymru in the WHQS23 is clearly an error, given the Senedd has no role in setting standards. This could cause confusion. It would be helpful if this could be rectified as soon as possible.

I should be grateful for a response to the above as soon as possible, and by **6 June** at the latest.

I am copying this letter to Councillor Protheroe and to John Griffiths MS, Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee, for information. I should be grateful if you would do the same when responding.

Yours sincerely,



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

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.