



COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES
Room 410, Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3XX
Tel: 028 9052 1864

To: Nick Henry
Clerk to the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Committee

From: Dr Janice Thompson, Clerk to the Committee for Communities

Date: 30 September 2021

Subject: Call-for-Evidence on Climate Change (No.2) Bill

At its meeting on 30 September the Committee for Communities considered your memo dated 16 August 2021 in relation to the above Bill.

The Committee noted that the Bill will place a responsibility on all Executive Departments to ensure that greenhouse gas emissions do not exceed the set Carbon Budget for any period. The following comments from the Committee therefore focus on the responsibilities of the Department for Communities (DfC).

The Committee feels that DfC should ensure that any new social housing is built to higher energy efficiency standards. Members are aware that there has been significant improvement in insulation and other technologies that will allow for greater energy efficiency in houses and that the Department should be striving to ensure that new houses are fitted with these technologies and working with private building contractors to do the same

Members also feel that DfC should consider retrofitting, where financially viable, its existing social housing stock. Whilst the initial cost of this might be considerable, the benefits will outweigh the initial outlay.

The Committee is of the view that the Department needs to continue to fund and consider enhancements to schemes such as the Boiler Replacement Scheme and the Affordable Warmth Scheme. The replacement of old inefficient boilers with newer, more efficient ones, will help to reduce our energy consumption.

The Committee would like to highlight that the Private Tenancies Bill, currently in Committee Stage, includes Clause 9, which gives DfC a power to make regulations concerning the energy efficiency of dwelling houses let under a private tenancy.

Finally, Members also feel that the Department needs to lead by example by ensuring that its own offices and working practices are as energy efficient as possible.

Dr Janice Thompson

Janice Thompson

Clerk, Committee for Communities