



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth
and Climate Change

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Baroness Parminter
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20 June 2022

Dear Baroness Parminter,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your Committee as part of your inquiry into behaviour change in the context of climate change and the environment. During my appearance before your Committee, I committed to write to you on several issues which are detailed below.

Net Zero governance and coordination

Baroness Northover asked about the frequency of meetings of the Climate Action Strategy Committee (CAS) and Climate Action Implementation Committee (CAI) and the accompanying Director-General-led group. Lord Browne also asked for more detail about how policy on behaviour change is coordinated across government. As we discussed when I appeared before you, it is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not shared publicly. However, you asked if we could say more about the frequency of meetings of the official level, cross-Government Director General group which discusses a range of climate change policy matters. This group meets monthly and is chaired by the BEIS Director General for Net Zero Strategy and International and brings together all domestic and international policy areas that impact or are impacted by climate change. The group has helped to support the delivery of ambitious UK policy announcements such as the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan and Net Zero Strategy and continues to drive forward domestic and international climate policy, including by overseeing delivery of the Government's existing commitments.

Lord Browne also raised the issue of inconsistencies and variability of departmental responses to the committee's enquiries on behaviour change. Consideration of behaviour change takes place across all relevant policies and needs to be fully embedded in policy making. While some Departments have dedicated resource on behaviour change to help support policy teams, it ultimately needs to be integral to and developed alongside the aims and interventions associated with each policy. It is therefore challenging to summarise activities on behaviour change without describing each and every policy to which it is a feature. However, the Government has set out its overall approach in the Net Zero Strategy following close, inter-Departmental working. Considerations around green choices are integrated throughout the Strategy and brought together in the chapter on enabling the public and business to make green choices. I spoke about the approach that is detailed in this chapter of the Strategy and which is guiding policy-making throughout our net zero programme when I appeared before you. I am happy to send you more details of the approach outlined in the Strategy if that would help.

Energy Performance Certificates

On the issue of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs). I can confirm that the Department of Levelling Up and Communities holds overall responsibility for this policy. Lord Colgrain asked in the hearing about the accuracy of EPCs and whether they were sufficiently reliable to use for regulation such as the Private Rented Sector Minimum Energy Performance Standards. We are continuing work to deliver the commitments laid out in the EPC Action Plan published in September 2020 to maximise the effectiveness of EPCs as a tool for improving the energy performance of buildings. As part of this delivery, we are developing the next iteration of the underlying Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) methodology, as well as exploring options to integrate Smart Meter Enabled Thermal Efficiency Ratings (SMETER), to improve the accuracy of EPCs and bring measurement closer to that of in-use performance. In November 2021, we published a report detailing the significant progress made thus far in delivering the commitments within the Action Plan. Further progress will come following a consultation on the Energy Performance of Buildings regulations expected later this year.

Cost of heat pumps

Lord Lilley asked about whether departmental cost estimates for heat pumps include the full costs of installing a heat pump, including the ancillary costs of resizing radiators etc. BEIS estimates for the costs of heat pump installation include all components associated with installing the appliance including the heat pump unit itself, labour costs, buffer and storage tanks, controls and fittings as well as replacement heat emitters, if needed. Depending on the policy in question for which analysis is undertaken, this can include the additional costs of fabric improvement alongside the heat pump.

I have copied this letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities.

Thank you for your interest in the Government's work in this area and for seeking my views on these important net zero matters.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'GH', followed by a horizontal line.

THE RT HON GREG HANDS MP

Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change