



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

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Government**

2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

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Sarah Couch
GreenTEA

sc@couch.org.uk

4 September 2024

Dear Sarah Couch,

Thank you for your email of 10 July about building homes to net zero carbon standards. I am sorry for the delay in sending you a response.

The government is committed to achieving net zero. You rightly raise the importance that decarbonising new housing will have in meeting net zero. Alongside our net zero target sits the ambition to build 1.5 million high-quality, well designed and sustainable homes over the course of this Parliament. Doing so will help put the UK back on track to meeting its climate goals, all while cutting bills, boosting economic growth and delivering energy independence with clean power by 2030.

The Building Regulations are set in performance terms without prescribing the specific technologies that must be used. This means that housebuilders have the flexibility they need to innovate and select the most cost-effective solutions in any particular development, including building above the minimum standards of the Building Regulations if they chose to.

Future standards next year will set our new homes and building on a path that moves away from relying on volatile fossil fuels and towards more clean, secure energy. As you point out, local power generation is an essential part of the energy mix and reduces pressures on the transmission grid. This is why we must take the opportunity, where appropriate, to encourage the fitting of solar panels on new homes and buildings.

The December 2023 Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) you have asked about sets out that Local Authorities may continue to set local standards higher than national minimum standards in the Building Regulations. If Local Authorities wish to do this, they must ensure that development remains viable and that the performance targets of increased standards are expressed in the same terms as are used in the Building Regulations. As you will be aware, this WMS was the subject of a judicial review recently. The judgement from the High Court may be appealed, and we are unable to comment further while legal proceedings are ongoing.

Thank you again for your correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan
Correspondence Unit