



c/o UK Green Building Council  
The Building Centre  
26 Store Street, London, WC1E 7BT

Secretary of State Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government,  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

05 March 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

The eyes of the world are on the UK as we gear up to host COP26, which will be a critical and defining moment in the global fight against climate change.

As leaders of local authorities and city regions across England, we have made strong commitments to radical carbon reductions, including through declarations of Climate Emergency. We must now act urgently, together with Government, to bring forward the necessary strategies, policies and partnerships that will enable us to deliver against those commitments.

One of our most important levers of change is the ability to ensure that all new housing, which is much needed to address the housing crisis, does not add to the carbon problem. Indeed, there are many benefits of reducing carbon emissions from new homes, such as improved health and wellbeing, better design quality and support for advanced methods of construction.

Yet the MHCLG consultation on Part L of the Building Regulations proposes to "*restrict local planning authorities from setting higher energy efficiency standards for dwellings*". Not only would this hold back those areas which want to be more ambitious than the national minimum, but it would also level down areas like London, where developers have successfully been building to a higher standard for several years.

New building standards are undoubtedly needed – but they must level us up collectively, rather than levelling down. We urge you to allow local authorities to retain the power to set higher requirements than national standards where this is demonstrably viable. We hope you agree that local leadership is absolutely central to achieving the Government's commitment to net zero carbon. Restricting local powers would be entirely out of keeping with this.

**UK Green Building Council**  
**Together for a better built environment**

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We do understand the concerns of some housebuilders about the possibility of different standards in different places. That is why organisations such as the UK Green Building Council have recommended MHCLG act swiftly to publish a forward trajectory for future Part L uplifts. This would allow us as local authorities to set higher energy performance standards sooner but in line with future national requirements, with a strong degree of consistency, and offering a clear pathway to zero carbon. In other words, we would all be on track for net zero – albeit at slightly different speeds to accommodate our different local contexts.

We look forward to your urgent response.

Yours sincerely,

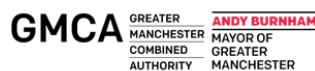
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