

St. Buryan, Lamorna and Paul Parish Council

Response to Cornwall Housing Decarbonisation Strategy (Draft) July 2024

The Parish Council supports the commitment and aims of the Housing Decarbonisation Strategy.

For new builds the strategy is good, but we would like to see a clear statement that the default for all new builds is roof-mounted photovoltaics. The criteria for not mounting photovoltaics should be clearly defined.

The following are practical implementation points we do not feel are sufficiently addressed in the strategy as they relate to heritage housing stock and, in particular, granite houses.

1. Efficiency of heat pumps in heritage properties.

While it is accepted that heat pumps in a well-insulated building are a highly efficient source of heating they become far less so the longer they have to work to heat the building. There is a balance between heat pump efficiency and the ability of a structure to retain heat. Not all of the heritage stock can be made thermally efficient enough to support the installation of heat pumps.

2. Small room sizes.

The size of radiators and thickness of internal insulation needed to support efficient heat pumps will reduce usable room sizes. Existing furniture may no longer fit into rooms. This is a potential hidden cost for households and will, potentially, have a lasting negative lifestyle/quality-of-life impact. The elderly may find this particularly burdensome both financially and psychologically.

3. Installation of radiators, pipes and hot water tanks.

- Lathe and plaster partition walls, found in many heritage housing stock, could represent an installation complication adding considerably to costs. Old lathe and plaster walls often lack structural integrity so may need total replacement to support the installation of larger radiators. Are the costs of structural retrofitting beyond redecoration needed to accommodate heating systems included in the funding?
- The tanks require substantial space which may not be available in smaller properties.

4. Planning consent for roof-mounted photovoltaic cells in conservation areas.

Who will be responsible for applying for permission and covering the costs?

5. Workforce.

Workforce skills are highlighted in the Strategy.

- Are there sufficient training places being created in Cornish colleges to meet the workforce needs of the strategy?
- What is the lead time before a skilled workforce is available to meet the needs of the Decarbonisation Strategy?

- Is there a sufficiently skilled workforce pool nationally that will be available to meet any temporary (or otherwise) workforce shortfall in Cornwall given that Cornwall will be accessing the same pool as every other local commissioning authority?