

Written Ministerial Statement on 'Planning – Local Energy Efficiency Standards' Position Statement

On 13th December 2023, the government issued a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) on 'Planning – Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update'. The WMS discourages local authorities from setting their own standards with regards to energy efficiency in homes and sets out the desired approach for sustainable construction policies.

Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) are committed to tackling the climate and ecological emergencies and in 2019 the council declared a climate emergency. It was identified that the main source of greenhouse gas emissions across the district is energy use in buildings accounting for 64% of district level emissions. Policy SCR6 was introduced in the Local Plan Partial Update (adopted January 2023) to reduce emissions in residential buildings and help achieve the council's commitment of carbon neutrality by 2030 and the government's target of reaching net zero by 2050.

Policy SCR6 sets out B&NES's approach to sustainable construction for new build residential development and sets limits on space heating and energy consumption. The targets for Policy SCR6 are based on robust evidence including a thorough and realistic viability assessment and the policy was tested and found sound at examination. Therefore, B&NES will continue to apply Policy SCR6 giving it full weight as an adopted Development Plan policy. However, it is acknowledged that the WMS is a material consideration and case officers will apply relevant weight to it on a case by case basis in the context of primacy of the Development Plan and the robust evidence supporting Policy SCR6.