



Rt Hon Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning

28 September 2026

Dear Matthew,

Embodied carbon in buildings

I am writing to follow up on the adjournment debate on embodied carbon in buildings which I secured on 13th July, and to press the Government on how it now intends to turn welcome words into practical progress.

The built environment sector as a whole accounts for 24% of the UK's carbon footprint (on a consumption basis), yet embodied carbon remains almost entirely absent from national policy. In the absence of a national framework, local planning authorities are increasingly stepping into the vacuum, producing exactly the patchwork of differing rules that industry itself is asking Government to replace with consistency and certainty. I was therefore glad that the Government's response, delivered by Samantha Dixon MP, accepted that action on embodied carbon is important, and that better measurement is an essential first step. I would now be grateful for clarity on three specific points that follow directly from that response.

1. Commissioned research

In the debate, the Government confirmed that it has commissioned research "to help improve our understanding of the data currently available on embodied carbon, and identify where gaps and challenges lie". This is welcome, and its findings could be foundational to the work that follows. So that industry and all concerned stakeholders can plan accordingly, please could you confirm who is undertaking this research, what falls within its scope, and when and where its findings will be published?

2. Measuring the Government's major schemes

The Government noted that larger developers and consultancy teams "may have the expertise and tools to carry out robust assessments", even where smaller builders do not. That expertise plainly exists on the largest projects of all - including the Government's own ambitions for new datacentres and its new towns programme. These are precisely the schemes where measurement could begin now, at scale, without placing any burden on smaller builders. Please could you set out what actions the Government intends to take to move towards measuring embodied carbon on these larger projects?



3. National planning policy and guidance

In its response to the recent *National Planning Policy Framework* consultation, the Government recorded that many respondents emphasised whole-life carbon assessment, retrofit and the efficient use of materials - with some advocating mandatory national requirements. While the response concluded that new mandatory requirements would not be proportionate, it committed instead to updating the *Planning Practice Guidance*, and accepted that assessment may be appropriate for “specific schemes where appropriate” - without indicating which schemes these might be. Please could you set out when the updated guidance will be published, and what types of schemes the Government considers whole-life or embodied carbon assessment to be a proportionate requirement?

I would gently note that the case for national leadership here is not a niche or partisan one. More than 250 organisations across the built environment sector have backed the industry-led ‘Part Z’ proposals, and colleagues from across the House - including on the Government’s benches - spoke of the need to act on 13th July. The preparatory work has largely been done; what is missing is national direction.

I would welcome your response on the three points above, and I would be glad to meet to discuss them. I would also be happy to bring some of the industry voices who have developed this work to a meeting with you, should that be helpful. Thank you, as ever, for your attention to this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Ellie Chowns
MP for North Herefordshire
Leader of the Parliamentary Green Party