

Please ask for: Cllr Adam Clarke  
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Our Ref: AC/FBB/MD  
Date: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021



Dear Secretary of State,

Leicester City Council has recently completed delivery of Phase 1A of the Green Homes Grants LAD Scheme. Unfortunately, whilst the availability of funding for investment in the most inefficient housing stock was very welcome, delivery of the Phase1A scheme did not reach the anticipated number of local households due to a combination of global circumstances and specific scheme limitations and we are experiencing similar issues under Phase1B.

Although some setbacks were created due to the COVID pandemic, which prevented early retrofit surveys and installations from taking place, there were and are other difficulties identified during delivery.

The purpose of this letter is to bring these issues to your attention and to ask that the government addresses these prior to roll out of future phases of the grants scheme.

In addition to our specific requests in relation to the key issues for Leicester City Council outlined below our overall view is that there are some general improvements that could be made to the scheme to ensure more efficient delivery of future phases of Green Homes Grant (LAD).

In particular, we would suggest that a more flexible scheme would allow local authorities to tailor their approach to fit with local needs and circumstances which might result in greater uptake of the grant.

The 3 main issues for Leicester are:

1. The threshold limit placed on EPC Band D properties created difficulties in progressing applications from survey to completion within the tight delivery timescales. In order to avoid exceeding the 30% D rated threshold many installations had to be held back until the requisite number of lower EPC rated properties could be dealt with. This delay resulted in many eligible installations missing the reporting deadline and being rolled over into a future phase. Additionally, renewable energy technologies are only suitable for properties which have already been upgraded via the fabric first approach, these types of property are more likely to be D rated and the threshold limit restricts the number of homes that can be upgraded in this way.

We would ask you to reconsider the threshold for D rated properties in need of EWI and renewable energy technology for future phases.

2. One of our most popular and necessary improvements to the older housing stock in Leicester is External Wall Insulation. Approximately 50% of Leicester's housing is made up of solid wall properties and, due to the increased

demand for this particular improvement measure, we did see costs starting to rise. This resulted in the larger properties being ruled out from receiving the improvement (because they exceeded the scheme average maximum grant award per property of £10,000) and left many households of multiple generations, who live in larger properties, not able to receive assistance despite their low level of income.

In order to address this inequality we would ask you to raise the grant threshold for larger homes / or introduce a sliding scale of funding based on size of dwelling to allow more discretion and flexibility in allocating funds to address local need.

3. Planning constraints have also placed difficulties on delivering External Wall Insulation within such a tight timeframe because, although permitted development provides some leeway to providing this measure quickly, there are still situations where full planning permission is required. Many properties not falling within permitted development criteria were eliminated from receiving this improvement under Phase 1A as the process of making a full planning application for each property was not possible within the time constraints of the scheme.

Ideally we would need longer timescales for these applications to be considered, however, we would welcome BEIS comments on how much of a barrier this has been across the Phase 1A schemes generally and to see what could be done to help overcome the issue for future phases.

Retrofitting homes to meet the objectives of the climate emergency is arguably the greatest challenge we face and is one of our greatest opportunities to reduce existing and future risk of fuel poverty.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter in more detail with yourself or one of your team when we can provide further evidence of the issues. I look forward to a response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Adam Clarke

Deputy City Mayor

Environment and transportation