



Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State
Department for Energy Security
and Net Zero
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Ealing Council Cabinet Office
Perceval House
14/16 Uxbridge Road
London W5 2HL

[by email]

8th August 2023

Dear Mr Shapps,

Local Authorities have led the drive for Climate Action across London, declaring climate and ecological emergencies, setting ambitious 2030 decarbonisation strategies, delivering on large-scale retrofit aimed at socially rented properties, vulnerable private households, schools, and other corporate buildings, and by ensuring that local plans and building codes exceed the unambitious national building standards.

Ealing Council leads on several DESNZ-funded initiatives, including the West London Green Homes Grant/Sustainable Warmth Fund, Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund, and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, as well as a number of non-funded programmes, such as ECO4, the Great British Insulation Scheme, and Boiler Upgrade Schemes, ensuring our residents are aware of these programmes and able to locate trustworthy installers. While we remain committed to delivering large-scale energy efficiency retrofit and decarbonisation programmes for our residents, we remain frustrated by government's short-term programme timescales, competitive bid cycles, and lack of meaningful commitment to the binding Net Zero Energy and Carbon targets set out in the Climate Change Act.

The enormity of the resources required to address the domestic decarbonisation within the London Borough of Ealing is immense. From calculations based on our recent retrofit programmes across London, this is estimated to be in the order of £300M for Council-owned properties – and £5B for all domestic properties within the Borough. The gap between existing funding from central government and the task in hand is profound and requires a step change in the scale of resources made available to effectively reduce carbon emissions.

In this regard, I write to you on behalf of Ealing Council to urge central government to significantly increase the funding for retrofitting homes and active travel measures, and particular to:

- **Extend the Green Homes Grant programme**, which is aimed at on-gas properties and has no successor after September 2023, leaving nearly 90% of London's vulnerable residents, who heat their homes primarily with gas boilers, without a mechanism to make improvements to their homes;
- **Introduce a successor to the Renewable Heat Incentive** and introduce higher standards for retrofit in the Heat and Buildings strategy, allowing both domestic and corporate buildings to rapidly decarbonise heating systems;



- **Extend the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)** to protect the estimated 30% of projects which are at risk of delivery failure by the current programme deadlines;
- **Re-open the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)** scheme for applications, ensuring a three-year delivery window for at-scale decarbonisation of social housing;
- **Increase landlord Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) obligations**, including grant funding or green financing opportunities for small-scale private landlords;
- **Increase skills gap funding and training for the retrofit and installation sector**, including retrofit coordination, PAS- and MCS- compliant training, and apprenticeship opportunities to increase the capacity of the sector to deliver at scale;
- **Increased non-competitive capital funding for both domestic and corporate properties**, which recognise the increased costs for retrofit due to the cost of living crisis, Brexit, and manufacturing scarcity around the most-needed measures (ie, Air Source Heat Pumps, External Wall Insulation, Solar PV/Thermal Storage, etc);
- **Clear and binding targets for decarbonisation of the gas heating network**, including a full-stop on the installation of gas-boilers from 2024 in all new-build domestic properties; and
- **Increase funding for active travel measures** including:
 - support for a new and enhanced bus network, focused on areas of low PTAL where transformational change is required;
 - funding for greener logistics, for example funds to enable trials of cargo bike deliveries and the transition to low-emission freight;
 - longer-term funding for cycle infrastructure to enable local authorities to meaningfully plan strategic cycling connections, rather than having to spend smaller amounts of funding each year which leads to piecemeal schemes;
 - funding to enable closer collaboration between transport and public health, e.g. through GP prescriptions for e-bikes, and communicating the potential for short walking and cycling journeys to help people get more active; and
 - support in developing better active travel options for disabled residents, e.g. upgrading cycling infrastructure to be compatible with recumbent bicycles.

Ealing Council is committed to delivering for our residents and we both challenge and welcome government to set the pace for ambitious, large-scale retrofit. I look forward to hearing from you regards this request on behalf of the authority for central government to increase the funding for retrofitting homes and active travel measures.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Peter Mason
Leader of the Council

Cllr Deirdre Costigan
Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet
Member for Climate Action