

PEPA Suggestions for the BEEF 10 Point Plan for a BEIS sponsored replacement to the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme

The replacement scheme must have a suitable lead in time to allow the industry to prepare, train and resource effectively. The scheme must have a realistic budget that grows with time to allow the scheme to build. GHGS has a unrealistically short lead in time, was very short term in nature and even when extended, had all the funding front loaded, and the industry could not take advantage of this. The timeline must be long enough to give industry certainty to invest and invest as the scheme grows.

The scheme should focus on delivering renewable and zero carbon technologies for heating and reducing energy use and heat loss via fabric improvements but should be realistic about what the consumer also considers important when improving their homes/assets. Boiler upgrades should be allowed where very inefficient boilers are currently in use – the boiler scrappage scheme can be pointed to as an example of success here.

Consider several phases for the scheme, where the requirements and allowed measures evolve over time as the industry capabilities evolve. Allow gas/oil boiler upgrades now, but phase them out over time to bring in heat pumps/renewable heating systems as the industry, infrastructure and methodologies become ready.

The scheme must require an up to date EPC at application (within 2 years) and require a follow up EPC to claim compliance. This will show the energy efficiency improvement in terms of EPC rating and carbon emission reduction. The government will be able to use this data for MI and reporting, to measure the success of the scheme in reducing energy usage and carbon emission.

Measures should not be restricted - the primary and secondary measures in GHGS actually did the opposite of its intention. Instead of primary/secondary measures, simply use the recommendations on the EPC. Homeowners should review the EPC recommendations and the scheme should simply link access to funding to any recommendation on an EPC, with improvements delivered through PAS2035/2030 (see below point).

The scheme must use PAS 2035 and PAS 2030 (2019) as retrofitting standards. This will ensure that a holistic approach to each property, quality installs, consumer protection and monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes – which in turn can be used to help modify and improve the EPC methodologies and any assumptions used within.

In terms of training - one of the several reasons GHGS was not as successful as it could have been was the lack of preparation and issues with resource availability. We can look at what Scotland are doing in terms of low carbon heating by putting a framework of training and upskilling, so the workforce is available when the initiative goes ahead. There needs to be sufficient lead in time for all roles to prepare themselves. GHG dumped a large compliance burden on installers and this led to a slow start of the scheme.

A focus must be on public engagement (education) and how this needs to be built on. It felt like a majority of the media articles focused on the negativity of the Scheme even at the start. A future scheme needs to be trusted. A silly example but Homes Under the Hammer never discuss improvements in terms of energy efficiency or even fabric first because consumers are unengaged --- there needs to be a push to reverse this.

A change (either reduction or premium) in Stamp Duty based on the potential Energy Efficiency improvement (from an EPC) for a property – therefore a net neutral change for the treasury; as those with high potential efficiency changes will pay an increased duty compared to those with zero potential changes, who will pay a reduced amount.