



<b>Subject:</b>	Update on Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub
<b>Date:</b>	9 November 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director Organisational and City Strategy
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner Brenda Roddy, Project Support Officer (Climate),

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: i) note the contents of the report
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub was established in November 2022 following publication of the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap which identified that emissions from domestic, public and commercial buildings account for 63% of the city’s greenhouse gas emissions. The Hub recognises that the majority of buildings in Belfast in 2035 already exist, and as a result, there is a need to focus resources on improving energy efficiency and decarbonising the heat supply to these buildings in order to achieve emission reduction targets and reduce energy costs.</p> <p>The Hub takes a consortium approach to catalyse retrofit activity across the public, commercial and private building sectors in Belfast, engaging stakeholders from across the construction supply chain, funders, academics, public bodies, housing providers and consumer bodies. Belfast City Council’s Climate Team convenes and supports the Hub’s activities as part of the wider support the team provides for the Belfast Community Planning Partnership. The Hub’s work is informed by the National Retrofit Strategy produced by the Construction Leadership Council and is Chaired by Peter Roberts (previously chair of NIHE) with technical advisory support provided by Professor Alice Owen from Leeds University.</p>
3.2	<p><b>The Hub’s principal duties are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify opportunities for retrofit across the city and bring together the partners who can realise those opportunities.</li> <li>• To identify and endorse the required standards of building performance that retrofit in Belfast needs to achieve.</li> <li>• To identify ways of supporting the economic activity, skills and jobs that achieving those standards requires</li> <li>• To draw together partners to source and release funding, using a funding-ready rather than a funding-led approach.</li> <li>• To promote a collaborative, solutions approach sharing knowledge across ownership and tenure.</li> <li>• To ensure engagement with stakeholders across the city, and to support and promote complementary initiatives.</li> <li>• To ensure that retrofit work considers climate resilience.</li> <li>• To report on progress, initially to the Community Planning Partnership’s Resilience and Sustainability Board</li> </ul>
3.3	<p><b>Achievements and process to date</b></p> <p>Participants in the Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub meetings over the past 12 months have confirmed the city’s aspiration to transform the city’s buildings in line with its carbon reduction commitments and discussions have generated a rich range of insights and potential interventions.</p> <p>Belfast’s approach so far has had some distinctive features compared to how other cities are tackling the retrofit challenge:</p>

- **Stakeholders from all aspects of retrofit delivery have been involved** – including installers, customers, housing providers, property owners, policymakers, researchers. The benefits of getting the ‘whole system in a room’ have been evident in the information that has been shared and the depth and breadth of ideas produced.
- **Using the UK National Retrofit Strategy as a reference point** has enabled discussions to reflect on how delivering retrofit, at scale, is a complex problem where many different elements all need to move at once. Skills, technical standards, funding, policy/regulation, market demand, supply chain capacity have to be progressed in parallel.
- **Political constraints** – whilst there is frustration at the constraints imposed whilst the NI Assembly is not functioning, there is also the recognition that the city stakeholders need to do what they can rather than waiting for restoration of the Assembly’s functioning.
- **Aiming to be funding ready rather than funding led** i.e. developing the projects that the city needs and then finding ways to fund those projects.
- **Thinking through how to work across tenures** – most retrofit programmes focus on one tenure only.

Discussions have focussed mainly on the residential sector to date, in part because improving homes is an important social priority as well as being essential for carbon emissions reduction. This discussion has gone further than many other cities by including consideration of the private rented sector alongside social housing and owner-occupied homes. Hub participants have also identified a need to retrofit commercial and public buildings in parallel with upgrading the housing stock.

### 3.4 Next steps

Based on discussions to date, ten ‘work packages’ – clusters of actions – are proposed, to run in parallel:

<b>Foundation Work Packages</b> – cross-cutting activities that underpin all the actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Data and information</li> <li>2. Co-ordination, learning and knowledge exchange.</li> <li>3. Ensuring the just transition – checking for equality of opportunity</li> </ol>
<b>Themed Work Packages</b> – clusters of actions identified:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Pipeline development &amp; funding options</li> <li>5. Creating customer demand – Improving understanding, creating the market</li> <li>6. Building energy performance assessment and monitoring</li> <li>7. Supply chain development</li> </ol>
<b>New work packages</b> – filling important gaps:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Commercial sector</li> <li>9. Local Area Energy Plan integration</li> <li>10. Resilience assessment</li> </ol>

A series of 43 actions was identified by Hub members, clustered into three work packages and ranked by a combination of potential level of impact, ease/difficulty of implementation, timescale to deliver and dependency on factors outwith the Hub. A full list of actions is included in Appendix A.

Task and finish groups are being set up for each work package with Hub members invited to lead and participate in those relating to their experience and expertise. The groups will examine the actions in detail, exploring if/how they can be taken forward and commencing work as appropriate. Workshops are scheduled to take place in late November 2023 with progress reported to the Hub consortium at its next quarterly meeting in January 2024.

Outputs of the task and finish groups will be integrated into and will serve as a delivery plan for the Draft Retrofit Strategy which will be a Hub consortium document. Plans are under development for a launch event of the strategy in February 2024.

<b>4.0</b>	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>
<b>4.1</b>	None
<b>5.0</b>	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
<b>5.1</b>	Corporate policies will be followed, and appropriate screening and mitigating actions for individual work packages delivered where necessary.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b> <b>Appendix A – Retrofit Hub Actions by Work Package (October 2023)</b>