

Report - UP2030 Retrofit Mapping Event Notes – 18/06/2024

1. Background

In June 2024 the Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub and the Council's UP2030 team recently ran a joint mapping exercise event to help visualise the need and opportunities for a neighbourhood retrofit programme. Drawing on retrofit experts and key stakeholders and working in sectoral groups, they focused on the UP2030 pilot area to answer a series of questions about what a climate ready net zero neighbourhood might look like, actions to make this happen, the barriers and opportunities as well as what might happen if no climate action were taken. (List of attendees in appendix 1)

2. UP2030 project area

The map below denotes the UP2030 project area which includes the Linen Quarter and adjacent communities living in Sandy Row, Donegall Pass, the Market and Barrack Street. This area was selected as significant groundwork has already been done with communities to help identify what a net zero community might look like, in order to develop a methodology that can be rolled out to other parts of the city.

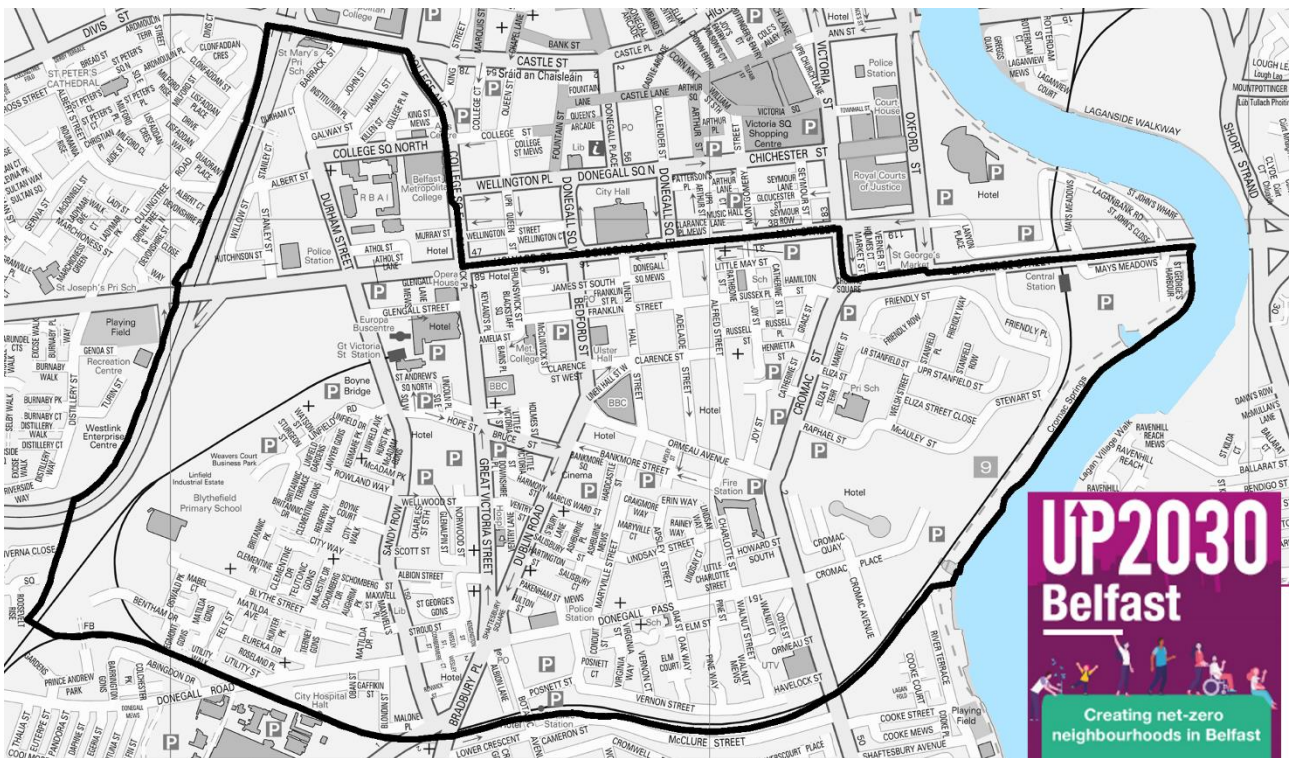


Figure 1 – UP2030 Pilot Area.

The activity used data from the Local Area Energy Plan to create maps that visualised existing buildings' energy performance rating, building type and tenure, as well as retrofit measures already in place, to help participants understand the challenges and opportunities around retrofit.

3. Task outline and questions

Attendees were grouped to work in their areas of retrofit expertise or interest, with topics covering residential (3 groups), commercial buildings group (one group) and public buildings group (one group). Groups were asked to cover a series of questions to explore potential barriers and opportunities to retrofit in their specific sector:

1. What would the impact be if we continued with 'business as usual' i.e., no action by 2050?

2. Consider a range of retrofit solutions to the property/typical properties of the street, including their costs and the impact to the owner, as well as associated barriers and opportunities.
3. Consider a financial and delivery model for each tenure type as well as any additional policies, incentives or disincentives that would support uptake at pace.
4. Propose an aggregated plan for the area and the sequence of actions that would support efficient delivery/roll out and encourage uptake.

The activity used data from the Local Area Energy Plan to create maps that visualised existing buildings' energy performance rating, building type and tenure, as well as retrofit measures already in place, to help participants understand the challenges and opportunities around retrofit. (Sample activity map - appendix 2).

4. Summary of discussion and actions

The exercise yielded two valuable outputs: issues to consider; and potential actions. The key issues discussed can be summarised as follows:

4.1 Residential buildings

Issues

Discussion covered challenges to social housing, private sector landlords and owner occupiers, looking at potential actions at householder level as well as organisational and NI Government level. Energy efficiency benefits were balanced with health and community ones and also considered how the threat of severe weather events and flood risk had to be factored in. Major barriers included lack of clarity on government commitment and policy around carbon emissions which affects investment decisions and also the limited options for funding the retrofit measures required.

Future actions

Discussion in all groups focused how to use the LAEP data to explore potential for a mixed tenure, fabric first pilot/s retrofit project focusing on a few streets. Recognising that the LAEP is a new resource, all were keen to explore the tool's potential starting with identifying what data layers area available, how current and accurate it is, and how it might be used to develop potential pilot projects. The exercise clarified steps and partnership working required.

4.2 Public sector buildings

Issues

The impacts of severe weather on public estate were recognised and these must be factored in. The public sector faces the same carbon emissions targets as GB counterparts but without access to same levels of financial or expert consultancy support. Belfast based public bodies have been trialling creative approaches to energy reduction, financing and future large-scale solutions however work must be joined up to share learnings and actions across the public sector as well as the commercial sector.

Actions

There is keen interest in using the LAEP data and other sources to plan joined up programmes such as low carbon district heating. Several research projects are coming to fruition that offer opportunities for rollout, including work led by BCC on the potential for solar PV energy generation in the city centre. Joint working and knowledge exchange is critical – a public/commercial event will be convened targeting those leading on energy across the city, sharing case studies of approaches already being successfully used to retrofit buildings and reduce emissions.

4.3 Commercial/private sector buildings

Issues

Around 85% of the commercial buildings here now will still be in place by 2050 however based on current energy performance and anticipated legislation, the majority of it risks being stranded assets within a few

decades. There is an appetite for retrofit but clear government policy is needed as well as high quality data on the energy performance of existing commercial. A strategic, city-wide strategy is required that intertwines the economic future of the city with its energy performance – an approach that can kick start long term international investment.

Future actions

Discussions required with Belfast City Council planning and regeneration teams along with university experts on institutional investment to identify local policy blockages and potential solutions. Work is required to establish a baseline of energy demand, carbon footprint, occupancy and vacancy levels in commercial (as well as public sector) stock.

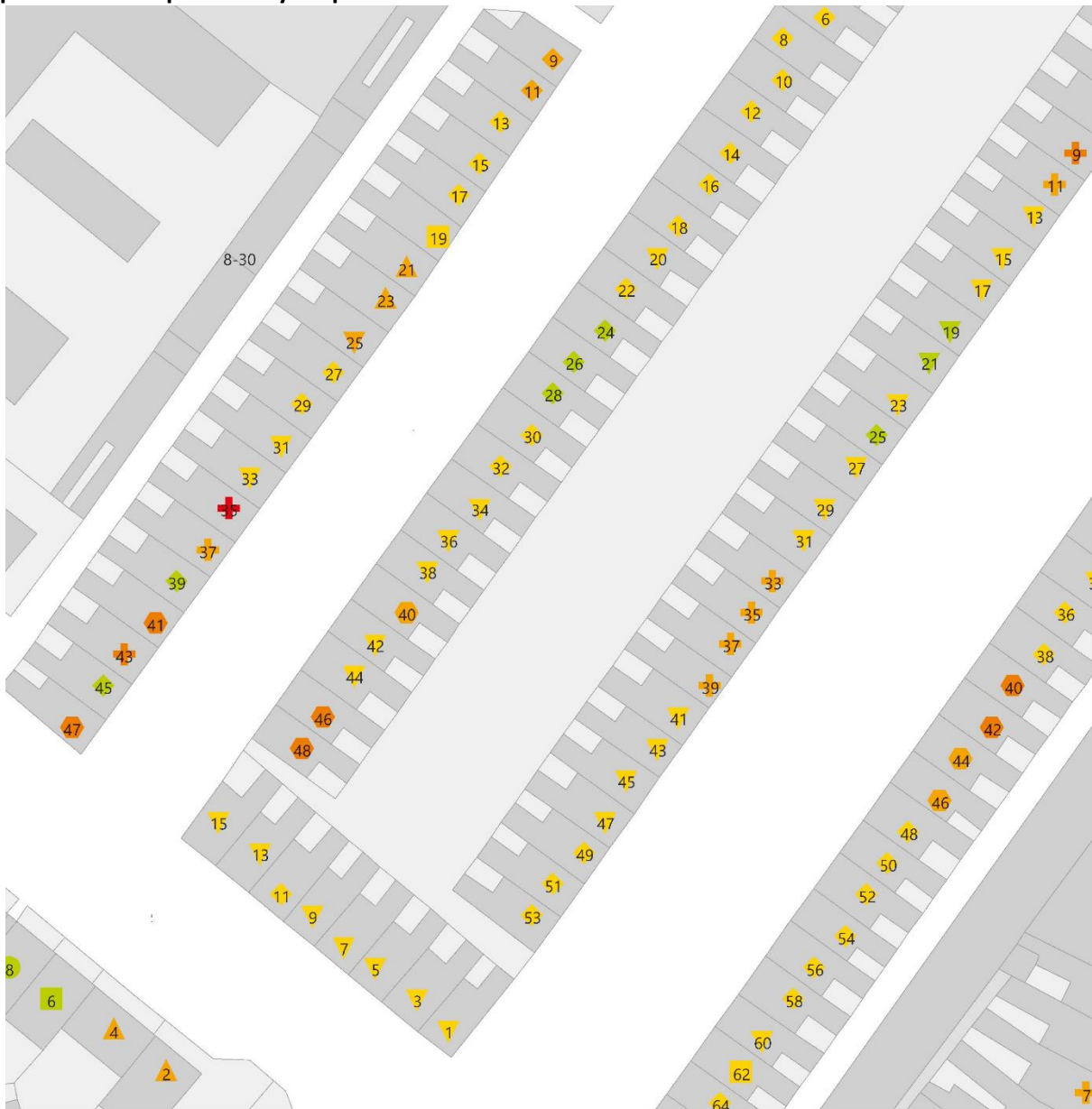
5. Next steps

Discussions will be analysed in detail and used to inform development of the UP2030 programme, helping to create a methodology for creating net zero communities across Belfast city. As part of that approach, this event will be run with members of the Climate and City Resilience Committee in order to tap into their local knowledge expertise and working knowledge of community needs.

Appendix 1 – List of event attendees

Representative	Organisation	Regeneration Project Officer	Topic
Amanda Newton	Mapping for Change	Project Officer	Residential
Angus Kerr	Dept for Communities	Director	Residential
Barry Neilson	Construction Industry Training Board	Chief Exec	Residential
Brenda Roddy	BCC	Climate - Project Officer	Public
Brian Rankin	Choice Housing	Energy & Sustainability Manager	Residential
Callie Persic	Belfast City Council	Dev Manager (City Centre Regeneration)	Residential
Ciaran Fox	Royal Society of Ulster Architects	Director	Residential
Claire Shortt	BCC	Monitoring, Learning & Reporting Officer	Commercial
Debbie Caldwell	Belfast City Council	Climate Commissioner	Residential
Eimear Taylor	Education Authority	Lead Energy Manager	Public
Elena	International Council for Global Environmental initiatives	Environmental Project Officer	Residential
Emma Sharpe	Belfast City Council	Regeneration Project Officer	Residential
Gareth Downey	BCC	Data Analyst	Residential
Gavin McGuire	Federation of Master Builders	Director	Residential
Gerard McCann	Global Commercial Real Estate Services	Exec Director	Commercial
Hannah Stockwell	Mapping for Change?	Community Development Executive	Residential
Harry McConnell	RPP Architects	Director	Commercial
Joann Russell	Mott MacDonald	Technical Director	Commercial
Katie McDonald	BCC	Data Analyst	Commercial
Martin Haran	Ulster University	Prof Real Estate and Urban Studies	Commercial
Michael Hamley	Mott MacDonald	Consultant	Public
Niamh Mulrine	BCC	Regeneration Project Officer	Residential
Raymond Gormley	Consumer Council	Head of Energy Policy	Residential
Richard Smyth	Landlord Assoc NI	Director	Residential
Richard Smyth	Landlord Association for NI	LANI Committee Member	Residential
Richard Treacy	Belfast City Council	Energy And Co2 Manager	Public
Roisin O'Neill	NIHE	Senior Grants Manager	Residential
Stephen Doherty	Ulster University	Deputy Director – Estates Services	Public

Appendix 2 – Sample Activity Map

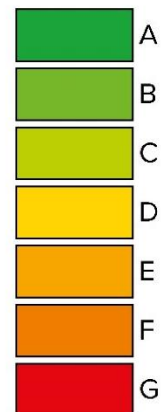


Domestic properties

Energy efficiency capacity

- Gas heating; Cavity wall insulation; Fully double glazed
- Gas heating; Cavity wall insulation
- ◆ Gas heating; Fully double glazed
- ▲ Cavity wall insulation; Fully double glazed
- ▼ Gas heating
- ★ Cavity wall insulation
- ⬠ Fully double glazed
- ⊕ None

Current EPC rating



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