



Housing Select Committee

Housing Retrofit Strategy

Date: 12 September 2023

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Contributors: Head of Climate Resilience

Outline and recommendations

This report provides Housing Select Committee with an update on the Housing Retrofit Strategy.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan was approved by Mayor and Cabinet on 11 March 2020

<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s72555/Climate%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

Progress against the Action Plan has been reviewed on an annual basis:

- 10 March 2021 M&C Climate Emergency Action Plan update
<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s78637/Lewishams%20Climate%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan.pdf>
- 9 March 2022 M&C Climate Emergency Action Plan update
<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s96746/Climate%20Emergency%20update.pdf>
- 8 March 2023 M&C Climate Emergency Action Plan update
<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s108302/230308%20MandC%20CEAP%20FINAL.pdf>

Recommendations from the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group were referred to Mayor and Cabinet on the 9 March 2022 and the response to those recommendations agreed by Mayor and Cabinet on 21 September 2022.

<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s102828/03%20Response%20to%20the%20recommendations%20of%20the%20Housing%20Retrofit%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group.pdf>

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides Housing Select Committee with an update on the Housing Retrofit Strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Housing Select Committee is invited to review the approach planned to delivering the Housing Retrofit Strategy.

3. Policy context

- 3.1. In 2016, the UK Government ratified the Paris Agreement, part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which commits countries to taking action to prevent the global average temperature increasing 2°C above pre-industrial levels. In 2019 the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 committed the UK to a legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050. In 2021 the Government published its Net Zero Strategy setting out proposals to deliver the UK's commitment under the Paris Agreement. In the 2022 Autumn Statement the Government set a national ambition to reduce energy consumption by 15% by 2030, with a new Energy Efficiency Taskforce to drive improvement in energy efficiency in households, business and the public sector.
- 3.2. Lewisham Council's Corporate Plan 2022-26 identifies the climate emergency as one of four local challenges, and states that
 - We continue to strive towards being a net zero borough by 2030, and will continue to lobby the government and work with our partners to achieve this.
 - We will lead by example, by using 100% renewable energy, retrofitting public buildings where possible to make them more energy efficient, and supporting residents to make their homes warmer and more efficient.
 - Our parks and green spaces are a lifeline to the health and wellbeing of our residents, and provide important resilience against the climate emergency. We will continue to invest in them, and continue to plant more trees – adding to the 25,000 we've planted since 2018.
 - The progress of our Climate Emergency Action Plan will be reviewed annually by our Executive Management Team and through our scrutiny committee process, including reporting annually to the Mayor and Cabinet. We will publish a public update once a year setting out what has been done in that year and updating our set of actions going forward.
- 3.3. The Corporate Plan priority 'Quality Housing' includes a commitment to improve the borough's housing stock, working with all housing providers to encourage retro-fitting as part of our drive to be net zero by 2030.

4. Background

- 4.1. Lewisham's Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group undertook a series of evidence gathering and engagement sessions between July 2021 and February 2022 with its final report and recommendations referred to Mayor and Cabinet in March 2022. The response to the recommendations was approved by Mayor and Cabinet in September 2022. The recommendations and response are included as Annex A to this report.
- 4.2. The Task and Finish Group recommendations include the following:

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- *The Task and Finish Group believes that it is time for a comprehensive retrofit strategy – which brings together all of the initiatives relating to housing retrofit across housing types and tenures. This should utilise the broad range of the Council’s powers, its influence and its partnerships. The strategy should set out clear measurable short, medium and long-term targets describing a path to carbon neutrality by 2030.*
- 4.3. The planned Housing Retrofit Strategy directly addresses this and many of the other recommendations from the Task and Finish Group.
- 4.4. Once-off internal funding from reserves to cover the cost of consultancy support for this work was approved in June 2023 and, following a procurement exercise, Turner and Townsend were appointed in August 2023. Members of the Turner & Townsend team will attend the 12 September meeting to provide a verbal update on their approach.
- 4.5. Details from the specification for the work to be delivered are set out below in section 5. The agenda item on the 12 September is an opportunity to involve the Committee in the stakeholder engagement phase of the work and to seek the Committee’s views on priorities and the scope of work planned over the next 5-6 months.

5. Housing Retrofit Strategy: lines of enquiry

- 5.1. The proposed themes and lines of enquiry from the Housing Retrofit Strategy specification are set out below in Table 1.

Thematic	Lines of enquiry
Lewisham Housing Retrofit Strategy	
A) Definitions of key terms and principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we mean by retrofit? • What level of retrofit is required to deliver net zero? • Identification the key metrics, benchmarks, and data sources to identify priorities and measure progress
B) A short summary of the challenges and opportunities of domestic retrofit in London referencing source material for detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges: scale, timing, cost, invasiveness, supply chain, network capacity, current delivery mechanisms, planning restrictions • Opportunities: grant funding, tackling fuel poverty, creating jobs and skills, improving health & wellbeing, adaptation and resilience • Good practice examples
C) Set out an overarching strategic approach to housing retrofit in Lewisham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segmentation of housing types and tenures identifying the practical steps the Council could take to scale up retrofit to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve building fabric ○ Electrify heat ○ Increase local energy generation, storage and smarter use of energy • Identification of how the practical steps mitigate the challenges and maximise the opportunities that have been identified in B • Development of short, medium and long-term targets
D) A costed plan for retrofitting the Council's 19,000	Building on the context of thematic A & B above:

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homes managed by Lewisham Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out a pathway to net zero for Lewisham Homes' properties • Identify funding strategies to deliver net zero and the opportunities/risks inherent within each. • Identify the key interfaces with the wider capital strategy for Lewisham Homes
E) Identification of the key connections across Council services to develop tenure-specific actions	<p>Building on the context of thematics A, B and C above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map and define the expected potential contribution of different Council services to delivery of the retrofit strategy • Recommend opportunities for further work drawing on good practice in house and beyond Lewisham <p>Services to be discussed but potentially to include: planning, housing grants, fuel poverty advice, enforcement of minimum standards in private rented, council buy backs.</p>
F) Identification of the key connections to others able to influence and support investment and delivery of retrofit.	<p>Building on the context of thematics A, B and C above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the practical steps for decarbonising the 1,800 homes managed by Regenter B3 as part of the Brockley Private Finance Initiative housing stock • Actions for the Council's work with registered providers operating in Lewisham • Actions for the Council's work with wider stakeholders in the community sector and private sector landlords and other London Boroughs • Identification of key lobbying points and partnership opportunities

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Standalone annexes to the Housing Retrofit Strategy	
G) Identification of a series of “shovel-ready” housing retrofit projects that can be brought forward to meet new funding and policy opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project summary • Benefits delivered • Asset ownership • Current status/timelines • Forecast cost • Funding secured / investment required • Data sources
H) An assessment of the key equalities implications of housing retrofit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the risks, or potential unintended consequences, of retrofit at scale, in particular in social housing and private rental. What are the sources of evidence that seek to understand these risks. How can these risks be assessed and mitigated? • What are the equalities implications of business as usual and continued low rates of housing retrofit?

Table 1: Extract from the specification for the Housing Retrofit Strategy identifying lines of enquiry

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. Achieving the ambition for Lewisham to be net zero carbon has significant cost implications. Work undertaken in 2019 to support the development of Lewisham’s Climate Emergency Action Plan estimated a minimum cost for delivering net zero of £1.6bn over 10 years.
- 6.2. Lewisham Council’s funding from government has been hugely reduced in the last 10 years while the Council’s costs have increased. Given the potential additional pressures associated with this work there is a need to find creative ways to find the resources needed.
- 6.3. Responding to the Climate Emergency is about making better use of resources and creating an alternative to a high-carbon consumer economy. In this context there are potential connections between delivering on a low carbon agenda and the Council’s need to cut expenditure and secure greater financial stability.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1. The report refers to the Climate Change Act 2008 and regulations under that Act. The Act establishes a legal framework that underpins the UK’s commitment to tackling climate change, including reducing CO2 emissions and addressing climate risks. The provisions of the Act apply at central government level.
- 7.2. Local authorities can use their own powers to take actions. The relevant powers are likely to include the wide general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which allows local authorities to do anything that individuals generally may do. The existence of the general power is not limited by the existence of any other power of the Council which (to any extent) overlaps the general power.
- 7.3. The matters considered in this report are not key decisions. The implementation of various matters referred to in this report may be key decisions and if so will be addressed through the appropriate mechanisms when those decisions arise.

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1. There are no specific equalities implications arising directly from this report but it should be noted that the risks and impacts of a changing climate will not fall equally,

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and without action the consequences will exacerbate poverty and health inequalities globally and locally.

- 8.2. In addition, given the fundamental nature of the changes needed, there are considerable risks that the actions taken to limit carbon emissions could, in themselves, disadvantage low income and vulnerable individuals and communities.
- 8.3. The specification for the Housing Retrofit Strategy specifically includes an assessment of the equalities implications of housing retrofit.

9. Climate change and environmental implications

- 9.1. Housing is a significant element of the borough's carbon emissions. On the Government's measure of scope 1 and 2 emissions at a local authority level they represent 50% of the total for Lewisham. Decarbonising the means to heat our homes will be central to achieving net zero and retrofit is going to be integral to this. Although there are a number of policy levers and funding streams encouraging retrofit that currently exist there is no existing retrofit programme nationally, regionally or locally that is delivering at the scale and pace needed to achieve the ambition to be net zero by 2030. This Housing Retrofit Strategy is expected to identify and cost the actions the Council can take, including in partnership with others, in the short, medium and long term to accelerate local activity towards decarbonising the borough's housing stock.

10. Crime and disorder implications

- 10.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

11. Health and wellbeing implications

- 11.1. Housing retrofit has the potential to deliver a range of health and wellbeing benefits including supporting those at risk of fuel poverty.

12. Background papers

- 12.1. Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan (March 2020)
<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s72555/Climate%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan.pdf>
- 12.2. Response to the recommendations of the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group (September 2022)
<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s102828/03%20Response%20to%20the%20recommendations%20of%20the%20Housing%20Retrofit%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group.pdf>

13. Report author and contact

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Annex A: Recommendations from the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group

Para	Recommendation	Response
3.1	<p>The Task and Finish Group believes that it is time for a comprehensive retrofit strategy – which brings together all of the initiatives relating to housing retrofit across housing types and tenures. This should utilise the broad range of the Council’s powers, its influence and its partnerships. The strategy should set out clear measurable short, medium and long-term targets describing a path to carbon neutrality by 2030.</p>	<p>The recommendation for a comprehensive retrofit strategy is agreed.</p> <p>New governance arrangements supporting the ambition for the Council to be net zero carbon by 2030 have been approved by the Executive Management Team and a new internal officer Climate Emergency Board is being set up. Coordinating delivery of the strategic approach to housing retrofit and retrofit across all buildings will be a key early priority for the new Board.</p> <p>In relation to housing retrofit the key documents expected to determine this strategic approach will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review and revision to the Council’s current Climate Emergency Action Plan • The Lewisham Homes Asset Management Strategy • The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan <p>A comprehensive strategic approach to retrofit will need to address the different challenges and opportunities across tenures and involve engagement with social housing providers and private landlords as well as owner occupiers and other groups such as amenity societies and community groups. This work is being taken forward but in the meantime it will be important to take advantage of opportunities such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Funding • The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund • The Home Upgrade Grant • Voids • Major works – all major works should have an assessment of works to incorporate energy efficiency measures • Property MOTs to include energy efficiency measures <p>The following timetable is proposed in relation to delivery:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voids – with immediate effect with a wider review to ensure the greatest impact can be achieved without reducing availability • Property MOTs – included in revised MOT checklist • Major Works- Is already part of the assessment for major works. However, if this is an improvement, there are Section 20 Leaseholder costs implications, so not always practicable. • Update to M&C on Lewisham’s Climate Emergency Action Plan (March 2023) • Draft strategy to Housing Select Committee (Q1 2023/24) • Housing Retrofit Strategy agreed by M&C Q2 2023/24
3.2	Progress on the development of the strategy (and the Group’s other recommendations) should be reported to the relevant scrutiny committees by the end of the 2022-23 municipal year.	An update will be provided to the Housing Scrutiny Committee as part of the development of the Lewisham Homes Asset Management Plan and the HRA Business Plan and a draft of the strategy will be presented to Housing Select Committee in Q1 2023/24.
3.3a	Mayor and Cabinet should: Consider how best to lead the step change needed to reach the Council’s ambition for net zero by 2030. The Task and Finish Group believes that the cabinet portfolios relating to the climate emergency, housing and planning are connected. It is recommended that discussions take place on how the cabinet portfolios might be formally linked.	Cabinet Member responsibilities are a matter for the Mayor. Regardless of the details of individual portfolios, officers will continue to support Mayor and Cabinet in discussions on how the Council’s ambition for net zero by 2030 is to be achieved.
3.3b	Mayor and Cabinet should: Hold discussions with leaders in neighbouring boroughs about their ambitions for net zero – and the potential to join resources, projects and ways of thinking together to meet some of the common challenges facing local authorities.	Officers liaise regularly with counterparts in neighbouring boroughs and across London including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating on London Councils Climate Emergency thematic groups and through the Local Environment Directors Network • Regular liaison by the Planning Service with neighbouring Boroughs through our duty to cooperate and through meeting with all London Boroughs and the GLA to discuss London wide issues. • The ongoing joint work between Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark councils to develop local opportunities for jobs and skills across retrofit and the green agenda

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3.3c	<p>Mayor and Cabinet should: Give careful consideration to the mechanisms available to have discussions with amenity societies, stakeholders and local groups about the values and principles guiding conservation and carbon reduction measures. It is important to find a common ground that recognises and emphasises the value of both.</p>	<p>Retrofit is an item for discussion at the Community Forum and Agents Forum. This is allowing officers to understand key issues of concern or importance from the public and working agents/ developers in the borough. A meeting focussed on retrofit has been arranged for 22 September 2022 to discuss the issue in more detail with community groups.</p>
3.4	<p>The Housing Select Committee should consider making retrofit a standing item on its agenda. This should include updates from social housing partners on their formal plans for net zero. In particular – the group recommends that the Committee invites Regenter to outline how it will work with the Council to improve the energy efficiency in the homes managed as part of the Brockley private finance initiative. We believe that there should be an expectation that all Council contracts with housing providers support Lewisham’s climate emergency declaration.</p>	<p>The Housing Select Committee’s annual work programme is a matter for that committee, subject to agreement by Business Panel who ensure a co-ordinated overview and scrutiny work programme.</p> <p>Officers will continue to support the Housing Select Committee in considering housing retrofit and the net zero carbon agenda more broadly. Officers intend to bring a report to the Housing Committee on the Council’s stock in 22/23 and to seek the committee’s views on the detail of the housing retrofit strategy in 23/24.</p>
3.5	<p>Further opportunities should be considered for all councillors to attend training and briefings on the impact of the climate crisis (with a specific focus on the importance of retrofit). The Committee suggest that this take place as part of the induction programme of new and existing Councillors at the start of the next administration, 2022.</p>	<p>The Governance team delivered a training session on climate emergency and planning to members on 5 July 2022. The Climate Resilience Team is working with HR to include a new Climate Literacy training package as part of the Council’s Learning Pool open to members and officers. Officers will continue to seek practical opportunities like this to raise awareness and engagement on climate change and the work of the council’s staff and members.</p>
3.6	<p>The Task and Finish Group welcomes the work being carried out by the economy, jobs and partnerships team (as below) – and it recommends that a further update on this work should be provided to the Sustainable Development Select Committee.</p>	<p>The joint work between Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark councils to develop local opportunities for jobs and skills across retrofit and the green agenda is continuing. Key priorities that will reinforce the potential benefits for employment and skills locally include a new Lewisham Social Value Procurement Policy to be published in 22/23 and the Council’s work with Lewisham College to develop training support and apprenticeships that will complement retrofit work by Lewisham Homes, Phoenix</p>

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		Community Housing and other registered providers with stock in Lewisham.
3.7	The Council should adopt a 'one stop shop' approach for residents to learn about the measures they can take to respond to the climate emergency. Work on this should commence immediately and, if possible, an on-line site be completed by the end of the calendar year 2022. The Council's 'one stop shop' of climate action advice, guidance and trusted links to reputable sources should draw on the best initiatives happening locally. The scale and purpose of this project should increase over time. It may start online with the intent to grow in ambition and reach, for example including exemplar retrofitted homes when available, and pop-up stalls/displays for assemblies and key Council events.	This recommendation is agreed and the Council's webpages will be updated by the end of 2022 to include a dedicated page with accessible information for all residents interested in home retrofit and decarbonisation. The information will also be promoted through the Council's social media channels. Residents seeking information on planning will be encouraged to also access this advice on retrofit.
3.8	The Council's communications team should work up a programme of Housing Retrofit advice items using all the usual channels and help residents link to the 'one stop shop'. Residents should be kept up-to-date with any key Council developments, funding news and innovations in this fast-changing area.	See above in 3.7.
3.9	Every effort should be made to work with our housing providers to ensure that tenants moving into retrofitted homes, fully understand the technology they are living with and how it differs from conventionally heated homes, to ensure the complete success of this step-change. This will become even more important when retrofitted homes change hands down the line.	A guide for tenants moving into retrofitted homes will be provided with the consultants/ contractor designing and carrying out the works charged with producing a draft for the Housing department to approve. This will avoid duplication as the consultants/ contractors may have already produced such guides, as well as ensuring information is tailored to the actual works carried out in individual properties. The Tenancy Pack for new tenants moving into their home will have the guide as part of the pack to ensure information on retrofitted homes can be passed on.
3.10a	The Planning Department should: Seek to grow officers' knowledge and confidence in dealing with retrofit measures. This should include, if considered appropriate, employing a specialist climate change planning officer or as a minimum altering the functions of key roles to take on responsibility for developing specialist knowledge in this	The importance of developing knowledge and capacity on housing retrofit within the planning service is agreed. The focus at this stage is on improving the knowledge of all officers rather than create a dedicated post. Officers will seek out opportunities to access good practice in the borough and elsewhere and to include retrofit and

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	area (as is the case with conservation). Officers should utilise these skills to develop robust and evidence based Council policy to support sustainable, high quality retrofit – in line with the Council’s ambitions for net zero.	climate change within plans for professional development in the planning service.
3.10b	The Planning Department should: Review the advice it provides to households on retrofit. There should be up to date information on the Council’s website for applicants considering retrofit measures including: internal and external solid wall insulation, heat pumps and energy efficient windows and doors.	Guidance is being produced for retrofit. It is proposed that a web page is created for the Council website.
3.10c	The Planning Department should: Consider how best (and when) the Council might proactively provide information and advice on retrofit measures during the planning application process.	It is recognised that wider advice on retrofit can be of benefit to applicants proposing modifications to existing buildings. Where relevant this advice is already provided as part of the pre-app process. Officers will consider how this can be strengthened and promoted further. In addition as identified in 3.10b the planning service will be undertaking a review of its website pages and guidance and as part of that, will ensure that guidance on retrofit and opportunities to make improvements are highlighted and promoted for all scales of development. This advice will connect to the information proposed under 3.7 to provide additional information generally on retrofit to residents.
3.10d	The Planning Department should: Review the existing extensions and alterations supplementary planning document – to include practical information and guidance on retrofit measures. It is recognised that this recommendation has resourcing implications (in terms of cost and officer time) and that this will require expert consideration and consultation. Accordingly, Members would welcome an assessment of the potential options and opportunities to deliver this work. The Group recognises the quality of the recent small sites SPD as an example of good practice and it recommends that the revised alterations and extension should be up to the same standard.	The Planning Service will review opportunities to enhance or supplement guidance in the existing SPD following completion of work to progress the Local Plan. The new local plan will include strengthened policy approaches to address the climate emergency, including support for retrofit measures. Following the hopeful adoption of the Local Plan by the end of 2023, officers will then have the capacity to review the position. In the interim, guidance will be prepared and published online.
3.11	The Council should explore the feasibility of recruiting an in-house retrofit coordination	New government funding for housing retrofit such as the Green Homes Grant

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	<p>specialist. Likely based in the housing team – this role would support the Council’s leadership in bringing together partners and stakeholders to work on this issue. The holder of this post could also develop the proposed retrofit strategy. Furthermore, the Task and Finish Group believes that there is the potential for this role to act commercially by providing paid for retrofit coordination, project management and quality assurance support to housing providers, landlords and homeowners. This could be initiated on a trial basis in coordination with Lewisham’s partner organisations and grown according to demand.</p> <p>The Group notes the Public Accounts Select Committee’s work on commercialisation – and it believes that this proposal would align with the goal set by the select committee for the Council to trial new commercial ventures. With the growth of this market and the obvious need for ‘trusted providers’ there may also be an opportunity in the future for a small in house team to provide homeowners with a (gradually increasing level of complexity) menu of retrofit measures which could grow organically, much as the commercially successful Waltham Forest Council Service Store model.</p>	<p>Local Authority Delivery and Home Upgrade Grant require contractors to meet updated accreditation standards as set out in PAS 2035. PAS 2035 is a specification for what is called ‘whole-house’ or ‘whole building’ retrofit from a technical standpoint and considering factors like occupancy comfort. Retrofit Coordinators and a range of related specialist roles are a key part of this accreditation and the focus on the whole building and not just a single retrofit measure.</p> <p>There is currently huge demand for Retrofit Coordinators because of the focus of government funding and it would be difficult to recruit and retain the expertise in house when the market is likely to offer higher wages than the public sector could offer. The focus therefore is on working with Lewisham College and Green Skills Hub to support Lewisham residents in gaining the skills needed to become a Retrofit Coordinator. Officers will keep this under review as such an in house resource would be highly valuable in reducing costs and adding value to Council-led retrofit projects.</p>
3.12	<p>The Council should continue to bid for pots of government funding to enable energy efficiency. The Executive Management Team should provide proactive and timely project management support in order to ensure that the council and our partners (where appropriate) are ready to bid and spend any funding in the limited timescales that it is most often available.</p>	<p>Officers will continue to proactively bid for new funding opportunities and to work creatively across the organisation to align external funding with existing priorities and capacity. This approach has the full support of the Executive Management Team.</p>
3.13	<p>The Council’s economy jobs and partnerships team should continue its proactive work in engaging with the local labour market of installers and builders to link up their needs with local education and skills providers. This should include efforts to engage with contractors and suppliers in Lewisham’s ‘anchor organisations’ and make the most of the partnership working encouraged by the signatories to Lewisham Deal. Consideration should also be given to updating the</p>	<p>The joint work between Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark councils to develop local opportunities for jobs and skills across retrofit and the green agenda is continuing.</p> <p>The Lewisham Deal Climate Subgroup brings together the borough’s anchor organisations with a focus on green jobs and skills and has recently been reinvigorated with the introduction of the</p>

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	curriculum of skills providers as soon as possible.	lead member for Climate Emergency as chair.
3.14	Further work should take place between the Council's housing and enforcement teams to consider how best to robustly enforce the minimum energy efficiency standards.	A Council wide review of enforcement powers and activities are ongoing. This work will include how officers can improve collaborative work and prioritise cases along with looking at opportunities to simplify current structures and includes within its scope enforcement under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) within the private sector housing service and Energy Performance Certificates Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards which falls within Trading Standards. Given the financial pressures the Council is facing for the next few years it will be essential that any enhanced enforcement work is able to cover its costs.
3.15	Every opportunity should be taken to dovetail retrofit work with our social housing providers, namely Lewisham Homes, Regenter, Phoenix, and any successors, with work already planned, or when new opportunities arise, so that improvements to homes will not have to be re-done a few years after completion, with great cost to the Council. Whenever a void appears in the register, the home should be raised to as high a level of EPC rating as possible including total retrofit and energy production such as the installation of photovoltaic panels or tiles.	<p>Officers support the idea that Lewisham's social housing providers look to align investment in the borough's housing stock with retrofit work.</p> <p>Further work is needed to understand the implications for potential retrofit work where this may impact on leaseholders.</p> <p>In relation to voids Housing will seek to carry out works like draft proofing, loft insulation and upgrading lighting and ventilation. There are financial and practical constraints on the level of work that can be achieved within current turnaround targets and a need to better understand how best to optimise thermal efficiency through retrofit within these constraints and wider pressures such as to provide properties for tenants housed in temporary accommodation. A review is planned to assess the right balance and the outcome of this review will be included in the proposed update to Housing Select Committee in Q1 2023/24 (see 3.1 above)</p> <p>As part of the Council's Buybacks programme all homes are expected to achieve an EPC D or equivalent, prior to first occupation. This is in line with Lewisham's lettable standards for homes currently managed by Lewisham Homes. Achieving a higher standard is beyond the</p>

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		resources available to this programme and attaining the highest standards of EPC ratings may be practically impossible in some cases. Where the EPC is below this standard, works are carried out at the void stage to ensure that the property is EPC D or above, prior to first let. Any works above and beyond achieving lettable standards would impact on the allocated budgets required to purchase the required number of properties to add to the Council's stock.
3.16	The housing revenue account maintenance plan should be used to ensure that any work tied to fire safety, which is currently the key priority, be seen as an opportunity to raise the EPC rating of the buildings being maintained, as has been done at the award winning Hatfield Close and Gerrard House project, now that United Living (the contractor on this project) have a 10 year partnership with Lewisham Homes. Members believe that the boroughs other housing providers should be encouraged to take a similar approach.	This is something that officers are actively working on and updates on progress will be provided to the Housing Select Committee.
3.17	Members recognise the importance of green infrastructure in mitigating the effects of the climate crisis, particularly in terms of urban cooling, and they recommend that the Sustainable Development Select Committee should further explore the potential for targeted urban greening to enhance the effectiveness of retrofit measures.	<p>Achieving the borough's ambition to be net zero carbon will enable Lewisham to be at the forefront of a transition to clean energy, make homes more efficient, create jobs and reduce local pollution and free up our streets. It will also make a significant contribution to reducing the impact of climate change but it will not prevent the borough being affected by a changing climate. As well as reducing our carbon emissions the borough needs to adapt to a future with more extreme weather events such as high temperatures, drought, flooding and storms.</p> <p>Green and blue infrastructure, our parks, open spaces, rivers and other watercourses have a fundamental role to play in mitigating those impacts. Built up cities in particular face the prospect of even higher temperatures through the Urban Heat Island Effect and sudden flooding as a result of rainfall and surface water. Trees, sustainable drainage and greening our streets will continue to be high priority for the Council and delivery of the Council's Open Spaces Strategy, Flood Risk</p>

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	<p>Management Strategy, Air Quality Management Plan and other strategic documents will report progress across these areas.</p> <p>The draft Local Plan is incorporating robust policies on Green Infrastructure recognising its contribution to tackling climate change. Planning are also working with the parks team to fund projects such as the greening fund and additional street tree planting through Street Trees for Living.</p> <p>Where planning permission is required we have guidance within our current alterations and extensions SPD to encourage the retention and/or re-provision of urban greening. Some alterations to front gardens however are permitted development and do not require planning permission unless recognised as a heritage asset (listed or in a CA).</p> <p>Removal of trees in private gardens does not require permission unless they are in a CA or the tree is covered by a TPO. In all cases of tree felling our approach is to resist and/or to persuade applicants to reconsider. However the Council has limited powers to resist the felling of trees that are not visible from the public realm and the number of applications to fell trees, in Conservation Areas, in back gardens is considerable.</p> <p>Green Scene are working together with Highways Department colleagues to identify locations within highways enclosures (verges) to relax mowing regimes to create new areas of meadow and increase the activity of pollinators. We have also recently replaced the seasonal bedding to Civic Suite and Laurence House with more sustainable planting.</p>
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