

Report to: Climate, Energy & Environment Committee

Date: 22 March 2022

Subject: **Better Homes Hub**

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Better Homes Hub, a key workstream of the Climate and Environment Plan.

2. Information

Background

- 2.1 The Combined Authority declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and set a net zero ambition by 2038. The modelling undertaken to understand how to achieve this showed how 1.8MTCO₂ per year can be removed from the CO₂ emissions of the region's homes by 2030. To help support the reduction of carbon required in housing stock the Scaling Up Better Homes report was produced in October 2020.
- 2.2 The report demonstrated the actions needed to support an ambitious programme of domestic energy retrofits and built on the delivery of retrofit that the Combined Authority has overseen since 2015 through the Better Homes Yorkshire partnership.

- 2.3 The report identified considerable progress, however there were issues in stalled delivery identified relating to the limitations of funding, the cost and complexity of renovating the housing stock and the willingness of homeowners to upgrade their property.
- 2.4 One of the key barriers to scaling up retrofit activity identified through the report was the significant lack of skilled labour. Skill shortages were identified in planning, surveyors, product specifiers, administration, finance, modern methods of construction, renewable technologies, ventilation, business planning, project management, customer engagement and onsite inspection. To meet the demand for housing retrofit a 30,000 strong workforce needs to be developed and sustained over the next 18 years.
- 2.5 The report also recognises that to reduce bills and make homes net-zero carbon, a 'whole house' approach to reduce energy demand and supply low carbon energy is required. Whole house retrofit is an opportunity to bring the energy consumption and comfort of all the regions homes up to a 21st century level, no matter which century they were built in. While the improvements involved do not have to be done at one time, they need to be planned to avoid having to redo work already done. This involves going beyond simple energy efficiency to a whole house retrofit approach to nearly a million homes over the next 18 years.
- 2.6 Five key elements emerged for successful delivery of housing retrofit:
1. trusted offer – ensuring that retrofit is delivered to a high standard and there is clear 'customer journey'
 2. building the market – building on demonstrator projects and an offer for different tenures
 3. fit for purpose – to maximise the benefits and enable deep reduction in carbon and energy use
 4. paying for it – making retrofit affordable and availability of finance
 5. delivery – development of effective supply chains including skills and training
- 2.7 The scale of the retrofit challenge is identified within the West Yorkshire Carbon Emission Reduction Pathways report published in 2020. The targets within this, which will work towards net zero, include retrofitting 700,000 homes with energy efficiency measures, installing heat pumps at 300,000 homes, and generating electricity from wind and solar to power 162,000 homes.
- 2.8 The scaling up of retrofit is addressed through the Scaling Up Better Homes Yorkshire report through a projected 18-year programme. This gradually builds skills and capacity to a peak of 80,000 retrofit installations between years 7-17, which across 18 years totals retrofit of around 1 million homes. Formation of the Better Homes Hub will aim to establish the programme of activity to enable and deliver retrofit at scale.
- 2.9 The Better Homes Hub is one of the proposals of the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan. The prioritisation process associated with indicative 40

million Gainshare funding allocation for Investment Priority 4 of the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy will inform the funding position of the Hub. Item 7 provides further information on the prioritisation process. Prioritisation will be considered by the Members of the Committee and associated funding approvals will also come through Committee.

West Yorkshire Better Homes Hub

- 2.10 To help develop the vision for net zero homes the concept of a Better Homes Hub is being developed. This is a programme to upgrade West Yorkshire's homes as a foundation for the transition to prosperous, net zero and sustainable communities.
- 2.11 The Better Homes Hub proposes a partnership between West Yorkshire Combined Authority, local authorities, and the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership of social housing providers. It is developing a joined-up programme that will bring all stakeholders together to overcome the barriers to upgrading our homes and neighbourhoods and deliver all of the available benefits.
- 2.12 The Hub aims to develop a one-stop-shop service to engage with homeowners and communities to help guide them through the process of housing retrofit. The menu of services would include information, independent advice and whole house retrofit planning services.
- 2.13 The Better Homes Hub will:
- Engage - work with all stakeholders to ensure everyone benefits from the transformation of our homes and communities
 - Design - come up with the optimum co-design for better homes and neighbourhoods and the way to deliver them, developing demonstrator projects in each of the five local authorities
 - Deliver - provide a trusted one stop shop to all homeowners and communities, ranging from awareness campaigns, free to use resources, advice, to delivery services; facilitate a range of funders to put everyone in a position of being willing and able to fund a better home.
- 2.14 A Steering Group has been established drawing on industry expertise to steer the development of the Better Homes Hub. The next step is organise a governance structure to oversee the proposals and mobilisation of the key activities including the one-stop-shop services.

Existing Programmes

- 2.15 The Combined Authority was successful in securing £5.1million from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This is part of a wider £10million project to retrofit housing association owned properties with energy saving measures including external wall insulation and double glazing. This scheme alone is projected to create 185 jobs, support 5 apprenticeships and save 450 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year.

- 2.16 Funding has been secured through the UK Community Renewal Fund for just under £500,000 to better understand hard-to-treat terraced housing in the Manningham area of Bradford. This project is being delivered with Manningham Housing Association and looks to engage households and provide advice on energy efficiency and retrofit advice. This will result in direct engagement with householders, production of whole house plans to understand measures and financing, feasibility work and drawing up of plans and options. The project will also see investment in skills to highlight skills and careers pathways for energy efficiency and housing retrofit.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The Better Homes Hub concept is discussed in the Combined Authority's West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan ('the Plan'). The Plan aims to establish the Better Homes Hub to deliver home improvement solutions for healthy, affordable, efficient and net zero homes across all tenures.
- 3.2 Housing retrofit can help reduce carbon emissions with the Carbon Reduction Pathways work demonstrating that 1.8MTCO₂ per year can be removed from the CO₂ emissions of the region's homes by 2030 with appropriate support and funding.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Transition to net zero carbon homes needs to reduce inequality in West Yorkshire. The Better Homes Hub looks to offer home improvement solutions across all housing tenures and will be inclusive of all. The housing stock improvements will seek to improve quality of life.
- 4.2 The Better Homes Hub is also an opportunity to provide better jobs and build regional capacity in the housing retrofit market.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Transitioning to a net zero carbon economy should be equitable and not be at the expense of any groups or communities. To that extent equality and diversity implications and solutions will be cross cutting and integrated into the development of the Better Homes Hub.
- 5.2 The need for all people living, working and studying in West Yorkshire to be involved in the responses to housing retrofit (and the wider climate emergency) is clear, and all groups and communities need to be involved in Better Homes Hub decision making.
- 5.4 The Better Homes Hub will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure progress is being made and inequalities are not widened.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The Better Homes Hub will need sufficient resourcing to enable the delivery of net zero neighbourhoods. Delivery will therefore require ongoing, targeted investment and an aligned financial policy and decision-making process.
- 6.2 Achieving net zero and climate ready resilience in West Yorkshire homes will deliver substantial financial savings to the region, both at an individual and organisational levels. Energy efficiency improvements will enable fuel cost reductions and improve comfort in homes.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 Additional staffing will be required across the Combined Authority to deliver the Mayor's and Combined Authority's commitment to tackle the climate emergency. New capacity and capabilities from our partners and stakeholders will also be needed to deliver on this agenda.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the Committee notes and approves the progress of the Better Homes Hub.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

None.