

Appendix 1 – Retrofit Hub Key Learnings

Successes

Project delivery commenced in January 2022 and was scheduled to deliver all outputs and spend by 30 June 2022. The project end date was extended to November 2022, to deliver further technical outputs.

The key successes seen from the delivery of the scheme are summarised below:

Description	Success
Whole house surveys delivered	150 whole house plans delivered
Number of residents engaged	MHA engaged with 1429 households.
Carbon savings potentially identified	The estimated cost of measures (in current prices) to retrofit all 150 homes is £4,758,800, whilst the estimated value of fuel bills savings that arise is £2,874,675 over a 30 year period. This is estimated to yield an annual carbon savings of 16,650 tonnes over 30 years (555 tonnes/yr).
Strong partnership working	With MHA and all delivery partners.
Architectural Toolkit of designs, drawings, and plans	9 properties included in the architectural toolkit. Some of these buildings have very technical junctions, with conservation, heritage features in addition to having a unique design
Technical Workshop delivered with Historic England, and Bradford Council Planning and Conservation Team	Highlighted the need for greater coordination of work between Planners and Policy to better understand conditions of properties that could benefit from retrofitting and the identification of properties that would benefit from installation of retrofit measures.
Adult Learners supported	5 adult learners completed an introductory Retrofit module with additional information, advice and guidance (IAG) support, providing learners with employment-ready skills

Number of volunteers engaged	8 local volunteers were engaged, who were provided with training and skills needed to deliver knock-door engagement with residents across the two target areas. 2 volunteers were subsequently hired as sessional workers on the scheme.
Engagement of FutureGoals online assets	Since the launch of the interactive, online resources on the FutureGoals webpage, the webpage has logged 4284 page views
Stakeholder Engagement	With colleagues from Historic England and Bradford Council Conservation and Planning Teams

Project Challenges

A summary of the challenges encountered during delivery are summarised in the table below:

Description	Challenges
Procurement of Technical Supplier	Limited pool of suppliers available to deliver retrofit plans
Short Delivery Timescales	6 months to deliver the scheme which included mobilisation and evaluation of project.
Delayed Government Announcement	Delivery timescales shifted into Ramadhan, and period of local elections which impacted resident engagement
Resident Engagement	Only 9 residents engaged with follow-on calls with the Technical Supplier following the receipt of their whole house plans.
Recruitment of adult learners	Expressions of interests were received on the course, but these did not convert into registration.
Marketing and Comms	Local elections purdah period in May 2022, and national mourning period in September 2022 impacted the ability to advertise the availability of free training to residents across West Yorkshire.

Barriers in planning constraints	Reduces the measures that can be installed onto properties in Conservation areas, limiting the impact of retrofit and reducing residents fuel bills.
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Key CRF Learnings

Retrofit Hub

- The importance of early resident engagement and the need to maintain engagement throughout the delivery of the scheme and to carefully manage expectations.
- Resident engagement must include tools to increase awareness of the climate emergency and to help empower householders to improving the conditions of their properties.
- Traditionally stone built properties are difficult to retrofit due to their construction requiring internal or external insulation which impacts space or volume.
- Greater consideration is needed when balancing the costs of measures against their lifecycle (Insulation measures have the longest lifecycle and easy to retrofit e.g., Loft & Cavity Wall Insulation) against balancing current efficient gas boilers and the cost of investing in other more carbon efficient heating systems.
- The impact these investment costs have on low-income residents, as well as private landlords who are less likely to invest into these measures, when they do not directly benefit from works is another factor.
- There is potential for the learnings of this scheme to start influencing Local Authorities to consider the impact retrofit installations can have in their region, and what options are available to help balance the need for sustainable measures and maintaining heritage features whilst having a building stock that is liveable, and healthy for its residents.
- Greater coordination is needed between Planners and Policy to understand conditions of properties that could benefit from retrofitting and the better identification of properties that would benefit from installation of retrofit measures.
- Retrofitting properties within a Conservation Area has highlighted the challenge of the benefits of sustainability against the preservation of heritage features whilst having a housing stock that is fit for purpose (liveable).
- Allow engagement with Historic England, and Planning and Conservation Team in Bradford Council

Adult Skills Training

- There was a lack of appetite within the community in taking up the free offer of skills training and a lack of understanding what roles/positions are available in the Green economy.
- Retrofit is a term not widely understood outside the construction sector, and further work is needed to sell the benefits of training to SMEs, and what potential roles exist in the Retrofit/Green economy to encourage potential learners to invest their skills into this emerging field.
- Steering groups to engage with of extended partners (such as Historic England and Bradford Council) are needed to encourage input into the delivery of the programme, and regular sharing of lessons and learnings.

Next Steps

- Consider creative ways to engage with communities, that utilises translation services, community champions, social media and interactive software that demonstrates to communities what impact they can help make towards reducing their carbon footprint and their energy consumption and bills.
- Consistency of retrofit work is needed across West Yorkshire so that all residents can benefit from installation works, as well as maintaining heritage features. There is a need to bring together Planning Authorities to agree a Retrofit Approach and design a Retrofit Design Guide for West Yorkshire to explain what permissions will or will not be needed when homeowners look to retrofit properties, outlining the benefits of retrofit to communities and dealing with traditional stone-built properties.
- There is a need for a national skills campaign to promote an understanding of retrofit and to sell the benefits of training to SMEs with a robust business case for employers to upskill their workforce.
- The findings and learnings that have arisen from the Retrofit Hub will be used to help inform future retrofit schemes such as the Better Homes Hub programme, to inform the scope and activities arising from the emerging new programmes.