

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 18 July 2023
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: No
Title of Report: Notice of Motion – Great Homes Upgrade

Executive Director: A Richards (Environment and Place)
Report Author: G Halksworth, Director Regeneration and Housing
Executive Councillor: Cllr D Garston (Housing and Planning)

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. On 23rd March 2023, a Notice of Motion was submitted to Council calling on the Government for a Great Homes Upgrade and a commitment to retrofit 19 million homes by 2030.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. **Cabinet is requested to consider and determine a response to the Notice of Motion for Great Homes upgrade, attached at Appendix 1.**
- 2.2. **That the Council continues to pursue its ambitions to retrofit our housing stock to reduce heat demand, save energy and assist our tenants with their fuel costs. To assist with the retrofit challenge, the Council will continue to bid for funding wherever possible and notes the Notice of Motion intention to request Government assistance with additional resources for Local Authorities to achieve our retrofit targets.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Southend-on-Sea City Council ('the Council') is committed to reducing the heat demand and improving the energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock. Residential housing accounts for 46% of Southend's carbon footprint and around 30% of South Essex Homes managed properties have an Energy performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D-G.
- 3.2 The LGA have reported in 2023 that England's leaky homes are costing fuel poor families an additional £250 a year. They have also reported that the retrofit of 3.1 million fuel poor homes up to EPC C will save up to £770 million a year from household energy bills by 2030, £500 million in NHS spending a year, 670,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide a year from 2030.

3.3 In response to these challenges, the Council, alongside our Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) South Essex Homes, has convened an Environmental and Sustainability Board and created a Retrofit Action Plan to outline our approach to tackling the retrofit challenge.

3.4 Retrofit Work Undertaken to Date

Since the inception of the Environmental and Sustainability Board, retrofit works have been scaled up with several projects now complete including:

- 56 EPCs undertaken on Council's worst performing stock to improve data,
- 54 Loft insulations installed and 21 LED lighting replacements,
- A pilot of the Endotherm product carried out in two major sheltered schemes which saw a 13.79% energy saving over 8 months, and;
- Upskilling of council with the Retrofit Academy including EPC and Retrofit Assessor training.

Larger scale retrofit works are also being carried out by the council and South Essex Homes including:

- A Data Modelling project, funded from the LGA's Housing Advisors programme, whereby the council commissioned Parity Projects to help define the council's baselines and provide in-depth modelling on the cost and impact of different retrofit scenarios.
- The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund project whereby the Council successfully bid for £1.15m of match funding to fabric first retrofit 110 of our worst performing homes from EPC D or E up to C with improvements made to wall insulation, loft insulation and glazing.
- Initial work on an ECO4 Funded project which will see up to 18 of our stock retrofitted with cavity wall insulation.
- And the Retrofit Show Home project which is currently onsite and will showcase the Council's approach to deep retrofitting an EPC D solid wall home with a range of interventions for education and engagement purposes to show our stakeholders and the wider public what is possible. Interventions include external wall and loft insulation, ventilation and heat recovery systems, triple glazing, air source heat pump, solar panels, smart controls, grey water recycling and sustainable drainage.

3.5 New Build Standards

The Council is also committed to preventing any future retrofitting need by developing high quality new build council houses. Therefore, all future council housebuilding via the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) will not burn any fossil fuels for heating and hot water. The homes will also be well insulated and begin to factor in overheating mitigations. HRA Phases 3 and 4 will use the outline 2025 Future Homes Standard to drive down energy demand and will get their heat and power from a combination of solar panels and air source heat pumps. Beyond these phases of development, the Council is looking to implement the Passivhaus standard as a means of drastically reducing residents' fuel bills and our carbon footprint and a pilot development of 3 units will commence later this year and will be monitored to assess the feasibility of rolling this out across future council house developments.

4. Reasons for Decisions

4.1. To respond to the Notice of Motion – Great Homes Upgrade

5. Other Options

5.1. None

6. Financial Implications

6.1. N/A

7. Legal Implications

7.1. N/A

8. Policy Context

8.1. N/A

9. Carbon Impact

9.1. As set out above.

10. Equalities

10.1. N/A

11. Consultation

11.1. N/A

12. Appendices

12.1. **Appendix 1: Notice of Motion – Great Homes Update**

Council – 23rd March 2023

NOTICE OF MOTION: TO ENSURE SOUTHEND FAMILIES HAVE A WARM HOME FIT FOR THE FUTURE

This council believes that a green recovery from the pandemic is not only possible but imperative if we are to meet our carbon reduction targets as a local authority. However, up to now much of the proposed actions are little more than rhetoric. We need to turn rhetoric into action. We note that melting ice caps and forest fires can often seem like someone else's crisis when many are taking effect so far from our homes. But we also note that crises closer to home affecting thousands of local families cannot be separated from those further afield.

Here in the city of Southend-on-Sea there are many families living in fuel poverty, and children living in homes affected by damp. In Southend-on-Sea, 72% of our homes do not meet basic energy efficiency standards, pushing fuel bills even higher. Across the UK there are more than 24 million homes leaking heat.

There is no route to decarbonising the economy without retrofitting these more than 24 million homes across the UK. Doing so would not only help to protect our planet, but can improve housing, lead to cheaper energy bills and create hundreds of thousands of good quality jobs.

Here in Southend-on-Sea there are properties that require retrofitting and this could create a number of good quality jobs in our local communities.

Southend-on-Sea City Council calls upon the Prime Minister to call for a Great Homes Upgrade and a commitment to retrofit 19million homes by 2030.

We also call on the Chancellor to use the Spring Budget to commit to spending £11.7Bn over the next three years to begin a Great Homes Upgrade, and that the government will commit to working with housing associations, private rental properties and owner occupiers to upgrade properties for net zero.

We also call on them to them to commit to setting up a retrofitting taskforce to target resources now to achieving net zero through upgrading properties. We also commit to writing to our neighbouring local authorities to ask them to join us to join the campaign.

Proposed by:

Cllr Tricia Cowdrey

Cllr Matt Dent

Seconded by:

Cllr Aston Line

Cllr Martin Berry

Cllr Maxine Sazda