

To: Cabinet
Date: 13 September 2023
Report of: Climate and Environment Panel
Title of Report: HRA Energy Efficiency Projects 2023/24

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Panel of the Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Panel Chair
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice; Cllr Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing
Corporate Priority:	Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford; Support Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-24; Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028
Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Appendices	
Appendix A	Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

Introduction and overview

1. The Climate and Environment Panel met on 12 September 2023 to consider a report concerning HRA Energy Efficiency Project 2023/24. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 13 September 2023, recommends that Cabinet grants project approval to proceed with energy efficiency projects on HRA projects and seeks delegated authority to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer and the Head of Law and Governance to spend the previously approved HRA 2023/24 budget of £1.585m, as agreed by full Council in 2021/22, for the purposes of HRA Energy Efficiency projects, including awarding contracts to contractors and consultants to manage and deliver the projects following the procurement process outlined in the constitution.

2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Railton (Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice) and Juliet Nicholas (Energy & Sustainability Manager) for attending the meeting to answer questions.

Summary and recommendations

3. Juliet Nicholas, Energy & Sustainability Manager introduced the report. Oxford City Council had set a target of getting 95% of its housing stock to an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C or above by 2030, alongside a commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions as a city by 2040 – going beyond EPC C. The report set out a proposed piece of work to deliver HRA energy efficiency projects using a budget previously agreed by Council. Cllr Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice added that this work was completely separate from the Clean Heat Streets trial in Rose Hill, which was delivered through a different funding pot.
4. The Panel asked a range of questions, including questions relating to the Air Source Heat Pump trial undertaken in 2022/23, costings, property types which would benefit from the projects, procurement and value for money, EPCs of the Council's entire property portfolio and the possibility of the Council benefitting from economies of scale.
5. In particular, the Panel was interested in the procurement process for delivery of the projects, particularly given the current financial climate (i.e. inflation) and the level of specialist skill required in order to undertake the sorts of work outlined in the report. The Panel noted that the procurement route had not yet been decided upon, but was keen that the Council explored the full range of options and suppliers, including establishing medium-to-long term relationships with suppliers and specialist contractors/sub-contractors in order for the Council to benefit from specialist skills and/or economies of scale, while enabling both parties to benefit from a level of certainty around availability of future work.

Recommendation 1: That the Council explores the full range of procurement options for the delivery of the projects, including alternative suppliers and the possibility of establishing medium-to-long term relationships with suppliers, contractors and sub-contractors.

6. During discussion about the fact that around 1,500 HRA properties did not have a lodged EPC; and the proposal set out in the report that EPCs would be conducted in circa 350 of those properties, the Panel noted the importance of EPCs as vital baseline data. It was noted that there was no timetable stated for when EPCs would be conducted in all of the properties which did not currently have one. The Panel was advised that the Council intended to conduct EPCs in all of its HRA properties, but the Panel felt that having a stated timeline would be beneficial.

Recommendation 2: That the Council sets a timetable for achieving a full set of EPCs for its HRA properties.

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