

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2679

Title: Just transition in retrofits

Executive Summary:

Approval of the Executive Director of Good Growth is requested to commission a specialist community research organisation on behalf of the London Sustainable Development Commission (LSDC) to investigate how experiences of home retrofits differ for people with different protected characteristics. The work will produce an evidence base and associated toolkit to enable retrofit delivery organisations, including the GLA, boroughs and others, to make future retrofit initiatives more inclusive, equitable, effective and responsive to community needs. This will help strengthen our policy and programme design to tackle fuel poverty and enable a 'just transition' to a net-zero, climate-resilient city. The research will use a participatory action research methodology to yield deeper, more nuanced insights, and take an approach that centres on Londoners' lived experiences. The outputs will be used in refining and implementing the recommendations from the project on cross-London retrofit delivery models currently being undertaken in partnership with London Councils (see DD 2657).

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Good Growth approves:

- Expenditure up to the value of up to £100,000 to procure consultancy services to research the impacts of home retrofits on London's diverse communities.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Philip Graham

Position: Executive Director, Good Growth

Signature:



Date:

20/12/2023

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The London Sustainable Development Commission (LSDC) was established in 2002 to give independent advice to the Mayor on sustainability. In June 2023 the LSDC published a report, '[London's Just Transition](#)', with recommendations for how the Mayor and boroughs can drive an equitable transition to a net-zero, climate-resilient city. This included recommendations to build public trust through deeper community engagement on climate action, and design more inclusive climate policies that benefit all Londoners equitably.
- 1.2. The report identified the need for further work by the LSDC and others to develop a more nuanced understanding of different communities' needs around domestic retrofits, so that all Londoners can understand and benefit from energy efficiency measures that cut bills and carbon.
- 1.3. The London Partnership Board has also asked the GLA and London Councils to consider equalities impacts as part of their joint project on options for a London-wide retrofit delivery model.
- 1.4. This research aims to support those aims.
- 1.5. Several London organisations including the GLA are delivering significant investment in retrofitting Londoners' homes, helping them cut carbon and become more climate resilient, while improving residents' quality of life by making them healthier and cheaper to run. However, there are a number of challenges to delivering these initiatives, including a lack of information and awareness about retrofit measures or support available; the complexity, cost and inconvenience to residents; lack of trust in suppliers and poor-quality delivery; and issues with the aesthetics and performance of the retrofit measures themselves.
- 1.6. The GLA Energy Team has produced a literature review of the existing evidence base. This found that although the high-level challenges of retrofits are relatively well-understood, the following gaps in the evidence base need to be addressed in order to design more tailored and equitable retrofit initiatives to serve Londoners' needs:
 - **There is a lack of evidence showing the specific barriers to retrofit experienced by people with different protected characteristics and intersectional identities**, particularly gender, age, ethnicity and disability. There is currently uneven awareness and uptake of retrofit initiatives among these demographics. Therefore further insight is needed to ensure the benefits of retrofit programmes are spread equitably across London's diverse communities and that programmes are not inadvertently neglecting or even harming particular groups.
 - **There is a lack of solutions tailored to different demographics**, especially gender, age, ethnicity and disability. The existing literature sometimes presents conflicting conclusions on the best messaging to use to win hearts and minds (e.g. cost savings vs. environmental impact). Further work is therefore needed to develop tailored, granular solutions.
 - **There is not enough insight that draws on direct engagement with beneficiaries of retrofit programmes**, for example through surveys, focus groups or other methods. Most work focuses on the views of retrofit delivery agents, social housing providers, or other organisational stakeholders. Recent qualitative research by London South Bank University on the GLA's Warmer Homes programme highlighted the need for programme design that is informed by community insight.
- 1.7. To address these gaps in the evidence, the LSDC proposes to commission research on home retrofits, with a focus on fuel poverty, to generate tailored insight to inform retrofit delivery on the ground in London's diverse communities. The research will engage beneficiaries of retrofit programmes to

investigate how experiences of programmes differ for people with different protected characteristics and intersectional identities, as well as what works on the ground for boosting take-up of retrofit and carrying out successful works in homes.

- 1.8. The project will be commissioned from a specialist consultancy with a proven track-record of coordinating community-led research, especially on social and environmental issues, with project management provided by officers in the LSDC secretariat (part of the GLA's Environment Unit). The project board will be the LSDC Just Transition Working Group, which will have ultimate responsibility for the budget and quality of delivery, and an expert advisory group will be established to give specialist strategic and technical advice throughout the duration of the project.
- 1.9. It is proposed that the research uses a 'participatory action research' methodology, to empower communities to play an active part in the research process as 'experts by experience'. A specialist community research organisation will be commissioned to deliver the work. Peer researchers will be involved to help shape solutions. This approach will deepen our understanding of the lived experience of Londoners whose needs are less visible through data and test new ways for their voices and experiences to be heard. This is expected to yield deeper, more nuanced insights, as well as 'walking the talk' on taking an approach that centres Londoners rather than policy-makers, in line with the Mayor's commitment to delivering an equitable transition to a net-zero, climate-resilient city. If participants' experiences with retrofits and the peer-research are positive, they may in time become potential champions for retrofit within their communities as a legacy of the work.
- 1.10. Peer researchers will be engaged in as many elements of the research process as possible including designing research tools, data collection, analysis and reporting back findings to their communities to 'close the loop' and ensure community research is not a one-way street of participants helping the GLA, but gives something back to the communities involved. Peer researchers will be adequately compensated for their time and expertise. Peer-led research has been successfully used to develop other GLA policies and programmes; the GLA's Skills team used this approach to understand the barriers to take-up of adult learning in London, and to ultimately inform the Mayor's Skills Roadmap (published 2022) and Adult Education Budget policy more broadly.
- 1.11. The primary purpose of the project is to explore how experiences and barriers are different for different communities and intersectional identities, specifically gender, ethnicity, disability and age. The project will also include participants from a range of housing tenures, including owner-occupied, social housing, housing association and private rental. Participants will be identified from the GLA's existing programmes (Warmer Homes, LCEF and Future Neighbourhoods programmes) and from local authority retrofit programmes.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

Objectives

- 2.1. The objectives of the proposed research project are to:
 - build the evidence base and capabilities required to design and deliver home retrofit programmes that are more sensitive to communities' needs, with a focus on how experiences differ according to gender, age, ethnicity and disability
 - produce research in a participatory way that makes residents feel listened to rather than feeling 'done to', responding to a common challenge of retrofit programmes
 - in doing so, support future work to build public enthusiasm for home retrofits, thereby increasing uptake in order to deliver the following Mayoral goals:
 - cutting bills to tackle fuel poverty, making London's homes healthier and more comfortable so improving mental and physical wellbeing

- supporting London's journey towards a net-zero, climate-resilient built environment.

Outcomes

2.2. The expected outcomes of the research are that:

- retrofit programmes are more inclusive with better outcomes and experience for beneficiaries, and higher, more equitable take-up
- there is greater compliance of retrofit programmes in London with the public sector equality duty and encouraging best practice in equalities and engagement work for retrofit programmes
- there is an evidence base available to help achieve the wider goal of building public trust, awareness and support for retrofits, in order to unlock progress on cutting Londoners' fuel bills and achieving net zero
- the GLA, boroughs and housing providers are better equipped to deliver retrofit measures in a way that is sensitive to Londoners' needs
- boroughs, housing providers and others are encouraged to take a more community-led, bottom-up approach to designing and delivering retrofit programmes, helping boost take-up and impact of programmes in London, as well as ensuring a 'just transition' to net zero
- there is an evidence base to make the case to government and other funders that retrofit programmes should include adequate funding for resident engagement and community-led approaches as an essential part of effective retrofit delivery
- a cohort of skilled peer researchers, and potential retrofit champions, with knowledge of retrofit programmes and experience of community engagement, is identified as a legacy to the research.

2.3. The research will address the following broad questions, albeit these will be further shaped and finalised by the peer researchers during the programme:

- how are the barriers to retrofit rollout different for Londoners from different communities and with different protected characteristics and intersectional identities?
- what works (and doesn't) at local level for boosting take-up of retrofit, carrying out successful retrofit works in homes, and building community understanding and support for retrofits?
- what recommendations or approaches should be adopted by retrofit installers and agencies delivering retrofit programmes in homes of Londoners?

Outputs

2.4. The following outputs will be delivered at intervals from May 2024 to February 2025:

- a research report detailing the findings from the peer research
- an interim workshop to bring communities and participants together with the GLA, boroughs and retrofit sector representative, to share the reflections of research participants
- recommendations for organisations designing and delivering retrofit projects (e.g. GLA, boroughs, SHPs, government, Ofgem)
- a toolkit for installers/delivery partners who need to enter Londoners' homes.

2.5. In order to maximise the impact and momentum for this work, its outputs will be delivered in instalments throughout the programme, set out in the timetable in section 7, rather than a single large

output at the end. Outputs will be communicated in formats that are accessible to communities as well as policy-makers.

2.6. The research will benefit a broad range of stakeholders:

Stakeholders	What good looks like
Local authorities, government, housing associations, social housing providers, Ofgem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informs retrofit delivery programmes so that they are more inclusive with better outcomes/experience for beneficiaries, and better take-up. - Greater compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and better consideration of protected characteristics and intersectionality including gender, ethnicity, disability etc. - Organisations can use the research to demonstrate and evidence that their approach will not leave anyone behind, and that their programmes have been sufficiently tailored.
GLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complements work with London Councils on retrofit delivery models (top-down) by providing granular community insight (bottom-up). - Informs future iterations of the Warmer Homes programme. - Lays groundwork for a more participatory relationship with communities around Energy and Environment priorities, policies and programmes. - Links with wider work to deliver retrofits funded by the Energy Company Obligation (ECO).
Communities experiencing fuel poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoidance of potential negative experiences sometimes resulting from retrofit programmes. - Retrofit delivery happens in a way that works for residents and aligns with their lives and priorities. - Communities and individuals that otherwise wouldn't have engaged are able to benefit from retrofit programmes, as programmes are better designed for their needs - Building citizen research skills in communities
Energy companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informs delivery of Energy Company Obligation in London so that more funding goes to London's diverse communities and is distributed more equitably across equalities groups

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act), as a public authority the GLA must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. The project will address an identified evidence gap around equalities, specifically how Londoners with different protected characteristics and intersectional identities experience retrofit programmes differently and face different barriers to retrofit. This in turn will help ensure that future retrofit programmes are designed to be tailored, effective and equitable, and do not inadvertently cause harm or neglect a particular group. This will enable best practice in compliance with the public sector equality duty by retrofit programmes in London.
- 3.3. Protected characteristics / intersectional identities to be considered will include gender, age, ethnicity, disability, language skills and immigration status. No negative equalities impacts have been identified.

4. Other considerations

Links with Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.1. This work supports the Mayor's goal to achieve a net-zero, climate-resilient city, by supporting further uptake of home retrofits. It aligns with the Mayor's Health Inequalities and Housing Strategies' goals to ensure Londoners can live in healthy, decent homes. It also supports the Mayor's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy Objectives, as well as the Mayor's Fuel Poverty Action Plan.
- 4.2. Internal and external stakeholders working on policy and programmes related to just transition and retrofits have been engaged to ensure the research supports sector priorities while avoiding duplication of existing work. In particular:
- the GLA Energy Team have worked jointly with the LSDC to develop the scope and deliverables of this project, and will sit on the project's expert advisory group to provide strategic and technical input throughout delivery
 - the GLA Strategy Team have confirmed this work complements their research on the just transition in collaboration with the London Research and Policy Partnership (LRAPP)
 - this work delivers on the London Partnership Board's request for the GLA / London Councils joint work on London's Retrofit Delivery Model to consider communities and inequalities
 - Community Energy London (chaired by LSDC commissioner Syed Ahmed) have stated this work complements their forthcoming research on community retrofits in Westminster.
- 4.3. In order to ensure this research adds unique value, a literature review and gap analysis of the existing evidence-base has been conducted that demonstrates the need for this work (see Appendix A).

Data protection

- 4.4. The research will handle Londoners' sensitive personal data, including their ethnicity and sexuality, for the purposes of understanding how different communities may be benefitted or excluded by retrofit policies on the grounds of their protected characteristics. Their data will be treated in accordance with GDPR regulations, and this will be communicated with them and the supplier undertaking the work.

Risks and mitigations

- 4.5. The key risks and associated mitigations associated with this project are set out in the table below.

	Risk description (cause, 'risk event', potential impacts)	Mitigation / risk response	Probability (1-4)	Impact (1-4)	RAG
1	Delays to the programme impact the ability to influence the development of Mayoral programmes.	The relationship with the contractors will be carefully managed with regular reporting on progress.	2	2	Green
2	Inconclusive research findings make it difficult to act on the information – e.g. because insufficiently tailored to particular stakeholders or not specific enough.	The relationship with the contractor will be managed closely, including with internal and external stakeholder input, to ensure the findings are detailed, relevant and fit-for-purpose.	2	3	Amber

3	Lack of engagement from the target communities creates small / unrepresentative research sample that skews findings; London's diversity is not fully reflected if participant drop-off during the project is skewed by accessibility challenges.	Select a specialist delivery partner with a track-record of engaging with diverse communities. Deliver tailored comms among target audience; pay participants for their time; remove barriers to engagement where possible (e.g. meetings in accessible locations at times of day / week, spread to enable the most people to attend).	3	3	Amber
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Conflicts of interest

- 4.6. No conflicts of interest have been identified for any member of staff involved in the drafting of this Decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is requested for expenditure of up to £100,000 to commission consultancy to research the different impacts of retrofits on London's diverse communities.
- 5.2. £70,000 of this expenditure will be funded from the Sustainability and Strategy Team (Environment Unit)'s budget, comprising £50,000 from the 2023-24 financial year and £20,000 from the 2024-25 financial year. £30,000 will be funded from the Energy Team (Environment Unit)'s budget for 2024-25 financial year.

	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Sustainability and Strategy Budget	£50,000	£20,000	£70,000
Energy Unit Budget		£30,000	£30,000
Total	£50,000	£50,000	£100,000

- 5.3. The budget for 2024-25 has been included as part of the Mayor's draft budget for the Environment unit however this is subject to formal approval as part of the Mayor's budget setting process. In the event of the programme not being sufficiently resourced following conclusion of the budget setting process then budget would need to be identified from elsewhere within the Environment Unit's budget.
- 5.4. Payment will be in instalments: one up-front, and the others aligned to the milestones set out in the delivery timetable above.
- 5.5. All expenditure will be incurred by 31st March 2025, and all procurement will be undertaken in line with the GLA's Contracts & Funding Code.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Executive Director, Good Growth (the "Director"), concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers and fall within the GLA's statutory power to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of social development and the improvement of the environment within

Greater London and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the GLA's related statutory duties to:

- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
- consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom
- consult with appropriate bodies.

- 6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the Director must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3 Officers are reminded to comply with the requirements of the Contracts and Funding Code, when they procure the consultancy services set out in the decision, above. Furthermore, officers are reminded to put in place an appropriate contract between the GLA and the relevant service provider, before the services commence. Finally, officers should ensure that the contract include a break clause, lest any future mayoral administration decide not to proceed further with the project.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. The project's key milestones and outputs will be delivered according to the timetable below.

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	19 Dec 2023 – 22 Mar 2024
Delivery Start Date	25 Mar 2024
Residents going through home retrofits to be recruited and trained on peer-research techniques to address the research questions above.	6 May – 7 June 2024
Delivery milestone 1: Following early-stage research interviews with residents, host a workshop to discuss early findings, bringing together communities and GLA / borough officers to discuss the reflections of peer-researchers. This will be accompanied by communications materials to disseminate the research findings among communities to raise awareness.	5 Aug 2024
Delivery milestone 2: Publish research findings based on analysis of evidence-gathering conducted by peer-researchers.	21 Oct 2024
Delivery milestone 3: Publish toolkit for GLA, boroughs and social housing providers to design retrofits programmes with greater community focus, with associated comms and launch event.	3 Feb 2025
Project evaluation completed.	3 Mar 2025
Project closure.	3 Mar 2025

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Jon Emmett has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Catherine Barber has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

Financial and Legal advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 18 December 2023.

✓

INTERIM CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:



Date:

18/12/2023