

Committee(s): Planning & Transport Committee	Dated: 05/03/2024
Subject: Retrofit of Historic Buildings	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need. 5. Businesses are trusted and are socially and environmentally responsible. 10. We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration. 11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	-
What is the source of Funding?	-
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	-
Report of: Director for the Environment	For Decision
Report author: Aled Thomas, Department for the Environment	

Summary

The City of London is home to more than 600 listed buildings (covering an area of about 500,000m²), 28 conservation areas, 48 scheduled ancient monuments and four historic parks and gardens.

For centuries, these buildings have been adapted to respond to changing environmental and social contexts, securing their cultural and economic benefits for future generations.

With the climate emergency representing the single greatest challenge facing our generation, bold and ambitious action is needed to unlock the potential in our built heritage and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Adapting them to the extreme effects of a changing climate.

Furthermore, the reuse, refurbishment and retrofit of existing buildings represents a crucial step in reducing the impact of the built environment, which is responsible for almost 40% of greenhouse gas emissions, 50% of extracted materials, and one third of waste globally.

By creatively unlocking the potential in our heritage buildings we can provide long lasting, resilient and beautiful places, whilst preserving our natural resources and reducing emissions.

The Historic Buildings Carbon Reduction and Climate Resilience Challenge was a collaboration between the City Corporation and Purcell during 2023 as one of the actions in the Climate Action Strategy. The Challenge has drawn from research and engagement with owners, occupiers, and caretakers of historic buildings within and around the City, which highlighted that whilst there is a large amount of interest and focus on tackling the climate emergency in heritage buildings, action has so far been limited, and projects that have sought to lead the way are not widely publicised or shared.

To address these issues, the campaign has culminated in an open-access, **Heritage Building Retrofit Toolkit** which provides a nine-step methodology aimed at empowering building owners to initiate the adaptations necessary to reduce carbon emissions and build climate resilience in their heritage buildings.

Whilst the diversity of the built heritage within the Square Mile is a considerable challenge (there is no one-size-fits all solution), the toolkit aims to provide a common methodology. Framed around eight core building types (or typologies), the toolkit is intended to facilitate a better understanding of heritage retrofit, drawing comparisons across similar buildings, and developing an adaptable and considerate approach.

By collating and signposting best practice principles and examples across these typologies, the toolkit provides a resource that will allow building owners to confidently start the process of responsible retrofit, build a business case and deliver the adaptations necessary.

In November 2023, Historic England published a draft Advice Note on 'Climate Change and Historic Building Adaptation' primarily aimed at local planning authorities, heritage consultants and those involved in the planning process.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Agree the Heritage Building Retrofit toolkit for publication and dissemination.
- Note the planned next steps relating to promotional and knowledge-development actions.
- Note the forthcoming 'Heritage Building Retrofit' retrofit event on 21 March to promote the Toolkit and associated actions.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London is home to more than 600 listed buildings (covering an area of about 500,000m²), 28 conservation areas, 48 scheduled ancient monuments and four historic parks and gardens.
2. For centuries, these buildings have been adapted to respond to changing environmental and social contexts, securing their cultural and economic benefits for future generations.
3. With the climate emergency representing the single greatest challenge facing our generation, bold and ambitious action is needed to unlock the potential in our built heritage, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt them to the extreme effects of a changing climate.
4. The City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy's Square Mile project plan for 2023/24 included a commitment to run a '**Historic Buildings - Carbon Reduction and Climate Resilience Challenge**' to explore current opportunities and barriers to the retrofit of heritage buildings. Purcell, leading heritage consultants with significant experience of working in the City of London, were contracted to support the delivery of the Challenge.
5. The 'Challenge' engaged owners, occupiers and caretakers of historic buildings within and around the City as well as other key stakeholders (e.g. architects, developers, contractors, local authority officers). The launch event at the London Centre in early 2023 attracted more than one hundred attendees which reflected the interest in this issue. This was followed by more in-depth discussions with specific groups (e.g. places of worship, Livery companies) and an on-line campaign through the Commonplace platform to capture information and case studies.
6. The research and engagement highlighted that whilst there is a large amount of interest and focus on tackling the climate emergency in heritage buildings, action has so far been limited, and projects that have sought to lead the way are not widely publicised or shared.

Current Position

7. To address these issues, the Challenge has culminated in an **open-access Historic Building Retrofit toolkit** which provides a nine-step methodology aimed at empowering building owners to initiate the adaptations necessary to reduce carbon emissions and build climate resilience in their heritage buildings. It draws on latest best practice guidance and sets an iterative, whole building approach that is sensitive to the particular challenges of heritage buildings
8. Whilst the diversity of the built heritage within the Square Mile is a considerable challenge (there is no one-size-fits all solution), the toolkit aims to provide a common methodology. It **highlights eight core building types (or typologies) within the Square Mile:**
 - Places of worship
 - Liveries and guilds

- Municipal buildings
- Large public structures
- 18th Century townhouses
- 19th and 20th Century commercial
- Industrial
- 20th Century modern

Within each typology, the toolkit seeks to facilitate a better understanding of heritage retrofit potential, drawing comparisons across similar buildings, and developing an adaptable and considerate approach.

9. By collating and signposting best practice principles and examples across these typologies, the toolkit provides a resource that will allow building owners to confidently start the process of responsible retrofit, build a business case and deliver the adaptations necessary. The nine-step methodology, summarised below, is based on.

Historic England – New draft advice on climate change and building adaptation

10. On 13 November 2023, Historic England published draft advice for consultation that aims to provide clear and consistent advice on balancing climate action with building adaptation. The Historic England Advice Note (HEAN) is primarily aimed at local planning authorities, heritage consultants and those involved in the planning process.

11. The final Advice Note will provide:

- Advice on the need for planning permissions or other consents for some of the common changes required to decarbonise and improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings.
- Advice to assist local planning authorities – and other parties involved in the planning process – in determining proposals to decarbonise and improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings to enable positive climate action. Some typical building adaptations in response to climate change impacts are also included.
- Advice on how local plans and other planning mechanisms can deliver a positive strategy for historic buildings that proactively supports climate action.
- Signposting to other relevant information, advice, and guidance.

12. The draft advice note seeks to address key questions about listed buildings and homes in conservation areas, including clear advice on insulation, boilers and heating systems, heat pumps, draft-proofing, replacing or adapting windows, and installing solar panels. This will dispel some of the myths around actions that can be taken in a listed building or conservation area.

13. The draft Historic England Advice Note and the Retrofit Toolkit are aligned in seeking to provide clarity and to support consistent decision-making for proposals to reduce carbon emissions and improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings.

Options

14. The Challenge has generated a significant amount of interest in the adaptation of heritage buildings. This underlines the point that the owners and tenants of heritage buildings are increasingly setting their own net-zero goals and developing pathways for delivering on these ambitions.
15. Various options have been considered on ways of continuing engagement and promotional actions. The proposed next steps are set out in the next section.

Proposals

16. The toolkit will be promoted with key stakeholders in the Square Mile. In terms of immediate next steps, an event will be held on 21 March to promote the toolkit and to highlight some of the retrofit case studies.
17. Officers will pursue opportunities to test the toolkit through forthcoming retrofit schemes. This includes City Corporation-led schemes as well as those led by external parties.
18. The toolkit includes case studies of recent retrofit schemes in the Square Mile. Additional case studies will be added as schemes emerge and will form part of the wider pool of Square Mile retrofit/refurbishment case studies
19. Alongside the toolkit, there is also a need for further knowledge-development and training actions alongside the toolkit. Options are currently being explored.

Key Data

20. Buildings account for 65% of carbon emissions in the City of London. The City is also home to more than 600 listed buildings. These buildings are often challenging to retrofit given their sensitive heritage status. This work has sought to empower owners of listed buildings to consider the potential for adapting their buildings, improving their energy efficiency and making them resilient to climate change.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

21. Buildings are the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the Square Mile. The reduction of emissions from buildings and their resilience to climate change are key priorities in the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy. Heritage buildings are a critical element of the City's building stock.
22. The Toolkit directly supports the draft City Plan 2040's Strategic Policy S11 (Historic Environment) which says, "The City's historic environment will be protected, celebrated and positively managed by encouraging sensitive sustainable retrofit of designated as well as non-designated heritage assets and improvements that would benefit climate resilience and adaptation."

Financial implications

23. Any future resource requirements will be included within Climate Action Strategy project plans.

Resource implications

24. None

Legal implications

25. None

Risk implications

26. None

Climate Implications

27. The Challenge and Toolkit are part of the actions of the Climate Action Strategy's Square Mile project plan. Reducing the carbon emissions from buildings is the main challenge for achieving a net-zero Square Mile.

Equalities, Resource and Security implications

28. None

Conclusion

29. The 'Historic Buildings - Carbon Reduction and Climate Resilience Challenge' has generated a significant amount of engagement and interest in the adaptation of historic buildings to ensure they are fit for the future.

30. The resulting Heritage Building Retrofit Toolkit aims to empower building owners to initiate the adaptations necessary to reduce carbon emissions and build climate resilience in their heritage buildings.

Appendices

Background Papers

- Appendix 1 - Heritage Buildings Retrofit Toolkit

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