



Report to: Cabinet Meeting - 20 February 2024

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lee Brazier, Housing
Councillor Paul Peacock, Strategy, Performance & Finance

Director Lead: Suzanne Shead – Director - Housing, Health & Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Julie Davidson, Business Manager - Housing Services, Ext. 5542

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report, Non-Key decision
Report Title	Solar Panel Installation at The Broadleaves and Gladstone House
Purpose of Report	To propose installation of solar panels at two of our Housing with Care sites to continue the move to renewable energy sources and benefit residents through lower energy costs.
Recommendations	It is recommended that Cabinet approve funding of £217,000 for the installation of solar panels at The Broadleaves and Gladstone House, to be included in the Capital Budget 24/25 financed by the Major Repairs Reserve.
Alternative Options Considered	Undertaking other identified energy saving measures alone without the installation of solar panels would limit both the benefits to tenants and the wider Council objectives.
Reason for Recommendations	<p>Community Plan 24/27 alignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the supply, choice, and standard of housing. • Reduce the impact of climate change. • To be a top performing, modern and accessible Council <p>To assist the Council in achieving its objectives as set out above. The lower utility costs at the schemes will directly benefit tenants as this will reduce the service charges and reduce impact of cost of living.</p>

1.0 Background

1.1 Gladstone House is a 60-apartment building, and The Broadleaves is a 30-apartment building with 10 x 2-bedroom bungalows situated within the grounds of the scheme. Both are Housing with Care Schemes, managed by the Tenancy & Estate Team.

- 1.2 Both schemes have heated internal corridors, seating areas with air conditioning, commercial kitchens and laundry facilities which designate the schemes as Housing with Care and mean they contain services with high energy consumption that form the landlord costs. These costs are passed on to tenants via service charges.
- 1.3 The increase in global energy prices have impacted on the electricity costs at both these sites and there are opportunities to move to greener energy and reduce communal charges for tenants created by landlord facilities.

2.0 Proposal/Details of Options Considered

- 2.1 An energy review carried out at both sites identified several areas where energy savings could be made, with several actions being agreed and commenced:

Identified Energy Saving	Action	The Broadleaves	Gladstone House
Residents and visitors had been turning up the heating and air conditioning controls, heating set at 29 degrees and air con set at 20 degrees.	Fit tamper proof covers to the heating thermostats and air conditioning controls. Cost £940.00 per site.	Completed	Completed
Commercial Kitchen	Review kitchen equipment usage, set up timers for overnight use of commercial dish washer.	End February 2024	End February 2024
Procure better energy supply tariff.	Procure an energy supplier for all the councils housing energy usage from a single supplier as a tender exercise.	Procurement commenced October 2023	Procurement commenced October 2023
Procure and install solar panels to the roof of The Broadleaves and Gladstone House.	Quotation received from specialist installer used on other HRA new build projects	Estimated generation of 97,000 kwh of solar power per annum	Estimated generation of 132,000 kwh of solar power per annum

- 2.2 This proposal was discussed at SLT on 21 November 2023 based purely on reducing energy costs at The Broadleaves. SLT recommended extending the proposal to Gladstone House as part of the same project.
- 2.3 The preferred option is to combine the energy saving initiatives above with the installation of solar panels on both Housing with Care sites which will contribute to increase homes heated through renewable energy and provide more affordable heating and service charges.

3.0 Environmental Benefits

- 3.1 Each site has been assessed to determine the best possible solution for Solar PV installation, with different installations recommended for each site. The total capital investment required to install Solar PV is £217,000.
- 3.2 In progressing with the installation of Solar PV at these sites more than 225,000 kWh of electricity can be generated on an annual basis, in turn saving over 45 tCO₂e of carbon emissions annually.
- 3.3 Carbon reduction projects such as this enable the Council to demonstrate our commitment to creating a more sustainable, carbon conscious and environmentally friendly homes for our residents to live in. This project also allows the Council to set an example as a leader of place, encouraging local businesses to consider and undertake carbon reduction measures and prioritise energy efficiency improvements.
- 3.4 Any excess energy generated, based on the annual energy consumption being less than that generated will be fed back into the grid, will attract a minimal income.
- 3.5 We will be monitoring it has potential to generate income through selling electricity back to the grid – current sell back rate is 15p per kWh and will substantially reduce costs and therefore service charges for tenants.

4.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications (FIN23-24/6096)

- 4.1 If the installation of solar panels is approved, £217,000 would need to be added to the Capital HRA investment Programme, financed by the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR).
- 4.2 The savings made from installing the solar panels, will be monitored, and reported through budget monitoring during 2024/25 following the installation. Any in year underspends can be transferred back into the MRR in year.
- 4.3 The budget can then be reduced as appropriate during the 2025/26 budget process.
- 4.4 Whilst we are comfortable that the installation of solar panels will benefit tenants through service charges, payback periods aren't known at this point (whilst we have carried out energy reviews across both sites) and this will be revisited twelve months after installation to confirm expected payback timescales, including taking account of any sell backs to the grid for unused electricity.

Tenant Implications and Feedback

- 4.5 Conversations have been held with tenants across both sites with most views expressed being positive as they see the installation of solar panels as helping the environment with the knowledge it may also impact positively on the service charges they pay.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.