by Gillian Brown, Head of Property Sustainability at Office of Government Property and Vice-Chair of the EMA Board of Directors

Building the Right

There has never been a more important time to ensure that the energy and carbon reduction projects we propose in our organisations see their way through to final completion. The current energy crisis makes projects both financially beneficial as well as creating the reduction in energy consumption which is key to how we navigate our way out of our reliance on fossil fuels. Yet still many of these obvious spend to save ideas are not pursued.

Historically, when building a project team to instigate an energy or carbon reduction project there were really only three key parties who had to agree; the finance representative, the procurement representative and the approving senior management team. With the money sourced and the correct procurement route identified, senior management sign off was almost a sure thing. Whether this was because organisations had more disposable finances, less questions were asked or organisations had enough of an understanding of the actual project, is unclear. Because of this, energy management professionals have been working for many years to reduce the energy consumption and relative carbon emissions of organisations. Many of the easy wins and easy to do projects have been tackled and now many of

the project works required in this energy transition are more complex.

These complex projects require a number of parties to be involved and a single missing link can be the reason that project work either stalls or does not start in the first place. What may seem like additional burden in sourcing project team members from across an organisation, is in many cases the way to ensure a balanced and collaborative approach is developed. This collaborative approach ensures that the project is a success both operationally but also delivers the savings or changes in energy expected.

When building a new project team, there are some key members which must be included. The finance teams, procurement teams and senior management teams all still reside within the new project team structure. In addition, there is now a requirement for other business areas to be included and consulted who were not previously considered as key stakeholders. The following groups are, from experience, missed in many project teams. Their lack of inclusion can not only delay project implementation but can reduce the project effectiveness and potential savings achievement once the project is completed.

The building user
A key group of people at times

not considered when planning an energy reduction project. In the most general sense, if people didn't use buildings then buildings wouldn't have a requirement for energy. The building user therefore becomes the linchpin to ensuring project success after the installation. What all projects should try to avoid is the building user fighting against the new installation, whether this be through lack of understanding of how the system works, historical processes or attitudes or non-acceptance of changes to working procedure. To help combat these challenges, building users should be brought in at the earliest possible stage. Bringing building users in early to a project allows the project team to understand the building and its occupants' ways of working, building specific idiosyncrasies and any occupant specific issues which could be addressed as part of the project works. It is important that communication is two way and project leads should ensure that they put across to the building user why the project works are taking place, how it will affect them, if at all, and how to work with the new installation upon completion.

The surrounding community
As we move into an era of district heating, communal heating and cooling solutions and renewable technologies which can be seen by or shared with others,

> ## "Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people.
> *Steve Jobs*

it is important to speak with the surrounding community and have them as close allies at strategic points throughout the project. Historically, it was only exceptionally large projects which considered engagement with the community, but more modern solutions such as large-scale district heating is a recurring example where more than one party has to work together to achieve project success. Whether a large or small project, it is important that communication with the surrounding community is carried out initially to understand the potential to develop or connect to such collaborative solutions. In these types of projects, scalability and future proofing will become more important, therefore getting initial communications right will inevitably pay off in the future. Community groups, surrounding business, domestic residences and central and local government are all key bodies who could be considered as key project team members with these types of projects.

The solution operators
The transition to a low carbon economy has come with a plethora of new technological solutions, but it would seem that the skill sets of technical operators has not kept pace with these new developments. It is important that the people who will operate the new carbon and energy reduction solution are brought into the project team early. Their contribution can not only highlight areas of conflict with current technology but it

allows members of the project team to consider any new training requirements for the operational team upon project completion. Ensuring these team members have the correct skills to create successful onward delivery after project completion will help ensure overall project success.

Data and modelling team
With new technological solutions comes a new wave of data sources so it is important to engage with the data and modelling team early. Many technological solutions installed for carbon and energy reduction now have either data movements within the solution itself or can provide data insights as part of output reporting. Although a relatively new concept to store and utilise these large data sets for better operational and management performance, it has become a quickly growing field in many organisations. Data connectivity, data labelling, data language and data visualisation are just some of the key items which need to be discussed with experts internally within the organisation. Getting these basics right at an early stage of the project can ensure a smooth transition after project completion.

Internal departments
When trying to install a new project it can be counterproductive if too many people are involved. Many organisations are large and have many department teams, some of which have no correlation to projects installed for carbon and energy reductions. Sending internal memos for each project can become a burden not only because of the additional administration but dealing with the opinions of those not involved can be labour intensive. But in many organisations, there are departments which would not naturally align with certain projects but can make significant contributions. There are great examples of teams external to

traditional project teams providing benefit such as bringing in space planners when undertaking projects which require building decant. But there are also departments which could play a smaller role. Communications teams for example may be able to develop succinct narrative for a complex project to allow dissemination of an idea to non-technical people or provide graphical expertise to develop visuals for those not familiar with particular spaces. Project planning teams which perhaps traditionally were only used on large scale projects could be brought in to assist with the development of timelines to keep projects on track. Soft FM teams can also play a key role in the adoption of new technological solutions as many projects can disturb internal and external spaces. Having members of the soft FM team as part of the project team ensures that they are aware of any additional workload which can be planned in advance to ensure that areas can be kept in working condition for the building users and eventually returned to a suitable state at project completion.

As we develop energy and carbon reduction projects both now, and in the future, the team we surround ourselves with will be one of the key factors in the ability of a project to succeed. For smaller projects we must walk a fine line between too many and not enough when it comes to the people involved in the project. It is not simply more is better as too many voices can lead to lengthy delays, can hamper innovation and can ultimately lead to a solution that becomes right for now and not right for the future. But it is important to ensure we have the right team skills to enable success and these skills may not be the ones that tradition dictates as we move forward. Each organisation is different and the best starting point is knowing the organisation and its people and then finding the solution that's right for everyone.