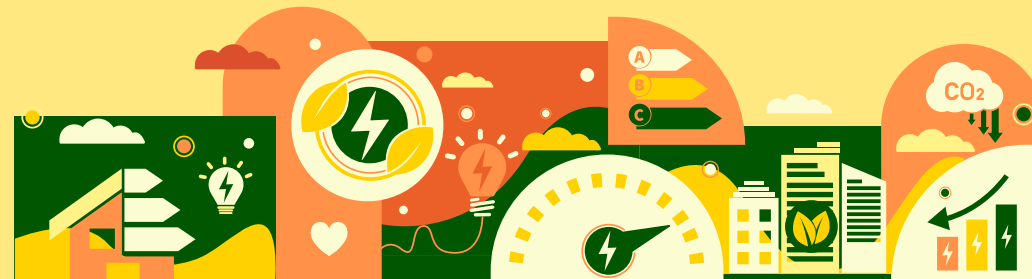


# Richmond

# Retrofit Strategy



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# Glossary

**Adaptation:** Adaptation is the process (or outcome of a process) that leads to a reduction in harm or risk of harm, or realisation of benefits associated with climate variability and climate change. Adaptation policies can lead to greater resilience of communities and ecosystems to climate change.

**Adaptive reuse:** Adaptive reuse is the repurposing of buildings that have outlived their original purpose.

**Archetype:** In the context of retrofit, “archetypes” refer to groupings of buildings that share common characteristics, such as construction era, building materials, layout, or energy performance.

**ASHP:** An air source heat pump (sometimes referred to as an air-to-water heat pump) transfers heat from the outside air to water. This in turn heats rooms in your home via radiators or underfloor heating. It can also heat water stored in a hot water cylinder for your hot taps, showers, and baths.

**Carbon neutral:** This is similar to net zero, but it refers to counterbalancing greenhouse gas emissions through ‘carbon offsetting’ which involves investing in carbon sinks such as trees and carbon capture technology that help remove emissions from the atmosphere to create carbon neutrality.

**Co-benefits:** Co-benefits may be 1) secondary benefits from climate policy action, 2) secondary climate benefits from other policy actions, or 3) the combination of climate and non-climate benefits;

both of which are targeted under an integrated policy programme.

**Community Energy:** Community Energy is an energy project when residents own or participate in the production and/or use of sustainable energy. Profits are re-invested into community power or realised by the members of the project.

**Decarbonise:** Reduce or eliminate carbon dioxide emissions from (a process such as manufacturing or the production of energy) or in (an environment).

**Deep retrofit:** Refers to a comprehensive, holistic renovation of a building’s systems, employing best practices to achieve at least a 50% reduction in both total energy use intensity and greenhouse gas emissions.

**Domestic emissions:** The greenhouse gases produced from residential activities, such as heating, cooling, cooking, and other household energy uses. These emissions are a significant part of the country’s overall carbon footprint and are crucial in the context of national efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Electricity grid or network:** The electricity network (i.e., electricity grid) is a physical infrastructure for the production, transmission, and distribution of electric power.

**Embodied carbon:** Embodied carbon refers to the whole lifecycle of carbon that goes into a building,

from raw material extraction, transport of materials, manufacturing and construction.

**Energy system retrofit:** Installing and/or replacing an energy system that is more energy efficient than the existing energy system. E.g. replacing a gas boiler with a heat pump.

**EPC:** An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is a legally valid document which provides an energy efficiency rating (displayed on an A-G scale) in relation to a property’s running costs. This rating will consider the potential energy performance of the property itself (the fabric) and its services (heating, lighting, hot water etc).

**Excess winter deaths:** These are deaths which are directly related to the cold weather. These are people who generally have underlying health problems but would not have been expected to die during this period. This is why we call them ‘excess winter deaths’ (EWD).

**Fabric first:** Type of retrofit which focuses on improving your home’s ability to retain heat. Anything that separates the outdoors from the indoors – floors, walls, windows etc. – is upgraded.

**Fuel poverty:** Fuel poverty in England is defined using the Low-Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator. A household is considered fuel poor if it:

1. Lives in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below.

# Glossary

2. Has a residual income below the official poverty line after spending the required amount to heat their home.

The key factors in determining fuel poverty are household income, household energy requirements, and fuel prices.

**Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery:**

A government scheme to improve the energy efficiency of homes of low-income households with a focus on energy performance certificate (EPC ratings of E, F or G), helping reduce fuel poverty, phasing out high carbon fossil fuel heating, and delivering progress towards the UK's commitment to net zero by 2050.

**Green investment:** Green investment aims to generate a financial return through investing in environmentally friendly organisations and ventures that have a favourable impact on the natural environment.

**Green jobs:** Jobs that contribute to preserving or restoring the environment and our planet.

**Green skills:** The knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a society which reduces the impact of human activity on the environment.

**Greenfield land/site:** Land which has not been developed.

**Greenhouse gas:** Greenhouse gases (also known as GHGs) are gases in the earth's atmosphere that trap heat.

**Greenhouse gas emissions:** Any of various gaseous compounds (such as carbon dioxide or methane) that absorb infrared radiation, trap heat in the atmosphere, and contribute to the greenhouse effect.

**Heat networks:** Heat networks distribute heat or cooling from a central source and deliver it to a variety of customers in a geographic area, avoiding the need for individual boilers or electric heaters in every building. Heat networks use local sources of low-carbon heat.

**Housing stock:** The total number of houses, flats, etc, in an area.

**Housing tenure:** Housing tenure describes the legal status under which people have the right to occupy their accommodation, e.g. home ownership or rented.

**HRA:** The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is intended to record expenditure and income on running a council's own housing stock and closely related services or facilities, which are provided primarily for the benefit of the council's own tenants.

**Landlord supply:** The household appliances provided by a landlord e.g. a boiler.

**Mass flow rate:** Mass flow rate is a measurement of the amount of mass (weight) passing by a single point over a length of time. This calculation is used when calibrating an air source heat pump.

**Net zero:** When the total greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are equal to the amount of greenhouse gas emissions removed from the atmosphere, with the goal of reducing global warming.

**Offset:** A process that involves a reduction in, or removal of, carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere in order to compensate for emissions made elsewhere.

**Oversize factor:** The heat output from radiators divided by the heat loss of a room. This calculation is used when installing a heat pump to see what type and size of heat pump is needed for the room, and if the room would benefit from other efficiency measures to prevent heat loss.

**Parity Projects:** An independent organisation that works with local authorities and landlords to provide data and develop cost-effective retrofit programmes.

# Glossary

**Particulate matter:** Particulate matter (PM) is everything in the air that is not a gas and as such it is made up from a huge variety of chemical compounds and materials, some of which are toxic. PM10 - Particles are less than 10 micrometres in diameter. PM2.5 - Particles less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter.

**Place-based approach:** Place-based approaches are collaborative long-term approaches that address a social issue e.g. poor-quality housing stock. They operate in a defined geographic location in order to focus on local needs and the local context. They involve multiple stakeholders such as community groups, not-for-profits, and local businesses to engage the local communities.

**Private able-to-pay market:** The able-to-pay market means residents that should be financially able to carry out energy efficiency improvements.

**Retrofit:** Retrofit refers to any improvement work on an existing building to improve its energy efficiency, making them easier to heat, able to retain that heat for longer, and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy.

**Retrofit measures:** The specific upgrades needed to improve the energy efficiency of a building e.g. installing a heat pump and replacing single glazing windows with double glazing are examples of specific retrofit measures.

**SAP:** Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the methodology used by the government to estimate the energy performance of homes.

**Sustainable construction:** Construction activities whose negative impacts are minimised and positive impacts maximised so as to achieve a balance in terms of environmental, economic and social performance.

**Sustainable development:** Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It aims to balance the needs of the economic growth, the environment and social wellbeing.

**TAP:** Technical Assistance Pilot Programme (TAP) is an initiative delivered by the Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy providing specialist consultancy services to local government.

## Policy/strategy

**Awaab's Law:** New legal requirements for social landlords to investigate hazards within 14 days, start fixing within a further 7 days, and make emergency repairs within 24 hours. Those landlords who fail can be taken to court where they may be ordered to pay compensation for tenants.

**Decent Homes Standard:** The minimum standards that social homes are required to meet introduced by the UK Government.

**London Plan:** The London Plan 2021 is the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. It sets out a framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years and the Mayor's vision for Good Growth.

**National retrofit targets:** The 2008 Climate Act committed the UK to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels, formed the Committee on Climate Change, and established UK carbon budgets. In the Net Zero Strategy the UK set a target to reduce emissions from public sector buildings by 50% by 2032 and 75% by 2037 against 2017 levels.

**PPRB:** The Policy & Performance Review Board is a non-decision making body supporting the five service committees by investigating specific issues of service performance and carrying out policy development and review work.

**The Warm Homes Plan:** The Labour Government plan to upgrade millions of homes with their Warm Homes Plan, aimed at giving families cheaper energy bills permanently, with warm, future-proofed homes.

# Foreword



This Retrofit Strategy provides the framework for Richmond upon Thames' approach to reducing carbon emissions from buildings in the borough, improving energy efficiency, and building resilience to the impacts of climate change in our communities.

A collaborative approach is needed. Success in retrofitting buildings in the borough will require input not just from the Council but from residents, landlords, housing providers, businesses, and community organisations. Richmond is fortunate to have a highly engaged population, many of whom are already taking steps to live more sustainably. This strategy builds on that strength, setting out how the Council will support and empower further action.

Richmond's housing stock is diverse, with a range of archetypes and tenure types that will require tailored solutions. This strategy outlines how we will address these through targeted interventions, pilot programmes, and place-based approaches that reflect the local context. Social equity is at the heart of the Council's approach. Retrofit must be accessible to all, not just those who can afford it. We will continue to support low-income households through initiatives such as Warm Home Packs and grant-funded schemes, while exploring new models of funding and enforcement to ensure that private rented homes meet minimum energy standards. We will also work to remove barriers to retrofit, working closely with our planning team and providing clear, accessible information to all who need it.

Delivering retrofit at scale will require a skilled and capable workforce. To that end, Richmond is part of the South London Partnership and is working with neighbouring boroughs, education providers, and industry to develop green skills and create pathways into sustainable careers, helping to ensure that local people

benefit from the economic opportunities of the green transition.

This strategy is forward-thinking, rooted in the character and needs of our borough. It reflects our commitment to fairness, environmental stewardship, and empowerment of communities to shape a more sustainable future. I encourage all residents, local organisations, and partners to join us in taking up the challenge of retrofit.



**Cllr Julia Neden-Watts**

Joint Deputy Leader of the Council  
Chair of the Environment, Sustainability,  
Culture & Sports Committee

# Executive Summary



The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has developed a thorough Retrofit Strategy to address the growing need for energy efficiency improvements and home retrofit across the borough. This strategy is a cornerstone of the borough's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 and becoming a net zero borough by 2043. It outlines a clear vision, strategic priorities, and a collaborative framework to guide the borough's retrofit efforts, recognising the critical role of buildings in reducing carbon emissions and improving resilience to the changing climate.

Domestic buildings account for 44.7% of Richmond's total carbon emissions, making them a focal point for climate action and highlighting how achieving net zero is not possible without borough-wide retrofit interventions. Richmond's vision is to become a beacon of sustainability and resilience, transforming its built environment through inclusive, data-driven, and community-led retrofit initiatives. The strategy aims to reduce carbon emissions through improved building efficiency, engaging and empowering residents and stakeholders, promoting inclusivity in accessing retrofit benefits and developing green skills to support the necessary workforce.

The strategy is structured around five focus areas, each addressing a critical element of retrofit delivery:

- 1. Privately Owned and Rented Housing:** This sector presents the greatest challenge due to limited regulatory levers and diverse ownership structures. The Council's approach includes establishing a Retrofit Hub to provide clear, accessible guidance on retrofit options, expanding initiatives like Warm Home Packs and participating in the Warm Homes Local Grant to tackle fuel poverty, strengthening enforcement of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), and developing Supplementary Planning Documents to simplify retrofit-related planning applications.
- 2. Place-Based Approaches:** Recognising the value of localised, community-led solutions, the strategy promotes place-based retrofit models that integrate social, environmental, and economic outcomes. This includes using the GLA Building Stock Model and Richmond's Climate Risk Map to identify priority areas, building partnerships with residents and organisations to co-design retrofit interventions, and exploring decentralised energy systems like heat networks and community energy.
- 3. Funding:** Securing consistent and diverse funding streams is essential to delivering retrofit at scale. The strategy outlines the Council's approach to funding, including identifying national funding opportunities, developing public-private partnerships, and exploration of innovative financing models such as area-based inseting and low-cost finance options.

# Executive Summary

**4. Green Skills:** A skilled workforce is fundamental to delivering retrofit effectively and sustainably. The strategy addresses the current skills gap through regional collaboration with the South London Partnership's Retrofit Taskforce and Green Skills Academy, partnerships with educational institutions to embed green skills into current curricula, and encouragement of apprenticeships.

**5. Retrofit Taskforce:** To ensure strategic alignment and operational coherence, the Council has established a Retrofit Taskforce comprising officers from relevant departments and external advisory partners. This group is responsible for aligning approaches, monitoring progress, facilitating stakeholder engagement, and strengthening partnerships to share best practice and attract investment.

The Richmond Retrofit Strategy represents a bold and necessary step towards a sustainable future. It acknowledges the complexity of retrofitting at scale and sets out a clear, actionable framework to overcome barriers and maximise benefits. Through leadership, collaboration, and innovation, Richmond Council aims to create a borough where every resident lives in a warm, efficient, and resilient home—contributing to a greener, fairer London for generations to come.



# Introduction & context



## What is retrofit?

Retrofit refers to any improvement work on an existing building to improve its energy efficiency, making them easier to heat, able to retain that heat for longer, and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. The fabric is the physical building construction which impacts building heat loss. The energy system is the energy infrastructure, technology, regulation, and user behaviour that determines the energy source and usage in a home. Retrofit encompasses a range of interventions which can be low cost and low effort such as switching to LED light bulbs to interventions in a 'deep retrofit' including installing roof, loft, and wall insulation and switching the energy source to an air source heat pump (ASHP) that are more costly and more intrusive. The more comprehensive the retrofit the more energy efficient the home will be, reducing residents' energy bills, carbon dioxide emissions and improving their thermal comfort.

Achieving these objectives will be a significant and necessary contribution to reaching the borough's aim of net zero by 2043. It will also help achieve the borough's overarching aims of improving the residents' living standards and quality of life, especially in the face of the climate crisis.

## Why retrofit?

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has committed to being a Carbon Neutral organisation by 2030, and a Net Zero borough by 2043. In 2022, domestic carbon dioxide emissions made up 44.7% of Richmond borough's emissions ([ref](#)), presenting significant opportunities to drastically reduce emissions and achieve Net Zero. Due to the significant percentage of emissions in buildings, achieving Net Zero can only be done through borough-wide retrofit.



# Introduction & context

## The scale of the retrofit challenge

The scale of retrofitting housing in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames presents significant challenges, particularly in improving the energy efficiency of its diverse housing stock. In 2021, 60.5% (ref) of homes in the borough had an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) below EPC C and therefore a significant portion of the housing stock requires substantial upgrades to meet appropriate energy efficiency standards.

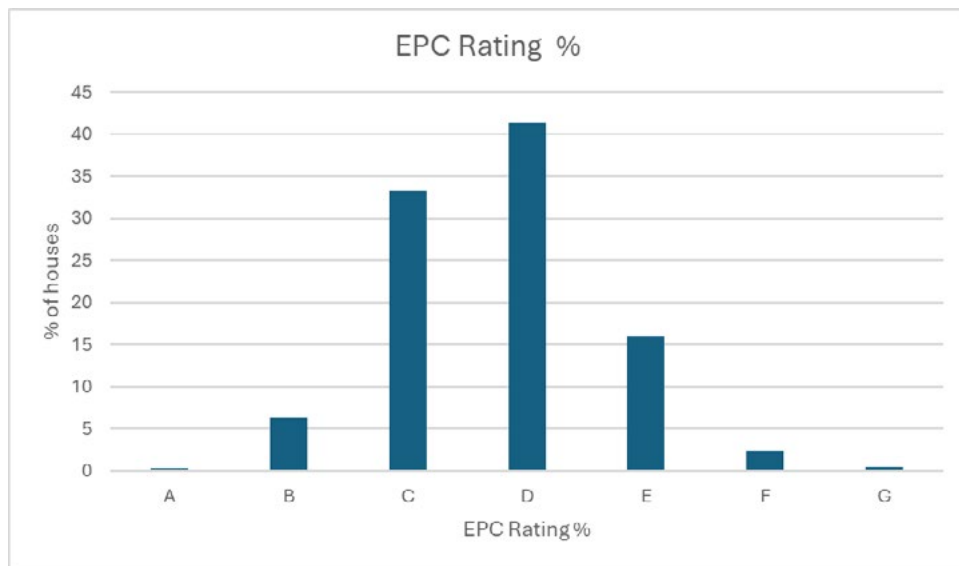


Figure 1: EPC rating of properties in Richmond upon Thames

The housing stock includes a mix of tenure types, such as privately owned homes, privately rented properties and housing association properties, each with different funding and management structures, further complicating retrofit efforts. As shown in Figure 2, a majority of housing is owner occupied, with the highest number as mortgage or shared ownership at 32.7%. Therefore owner occupiers are a key demographic that the Council must engage with to encourage retrofit in the private sector.

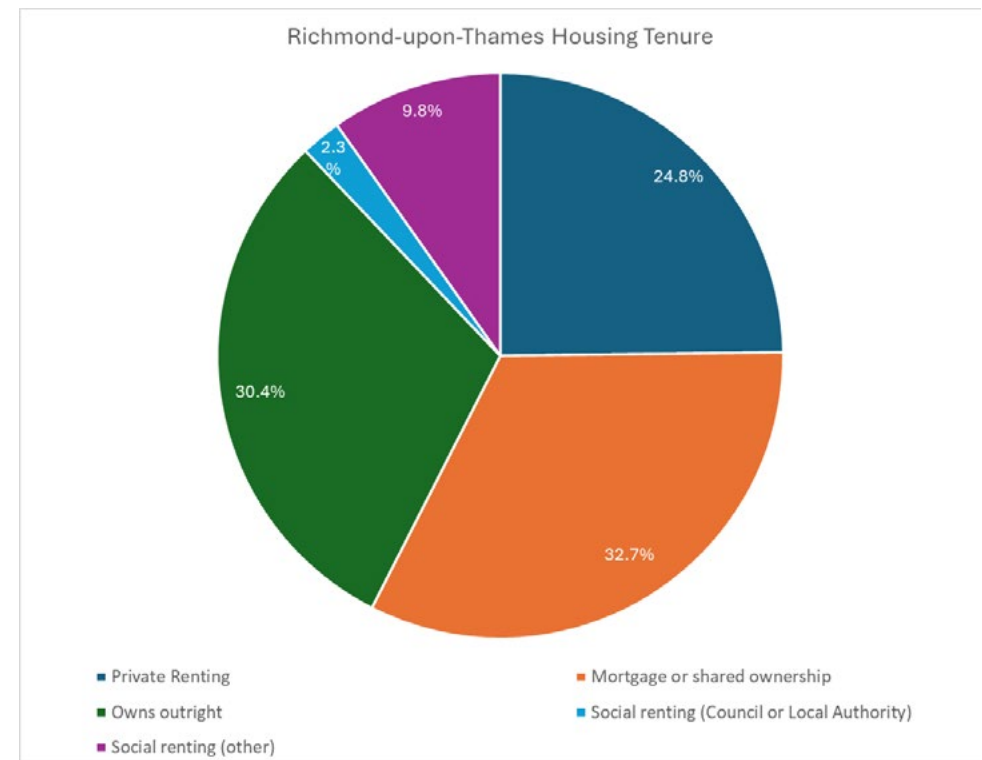
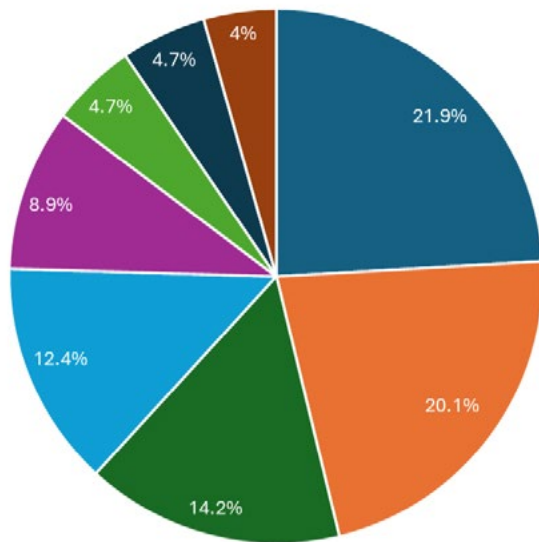


Figure 2: The composition of housing tenure in Richmond upon Thames [datarich]

# Introduction & context

Furthermore, Richmond features a variety of housing archetypes laid out in Figure 3, from solid brick mansion blocks to post-war cavity-built blocks, each requiring bespoke solutions for insulation, heating systems, and ventilation. These varied building types present specific challenges for retrofitting due to the limitations in their existing infrastructure and design.

Richmond Housing Archetypes

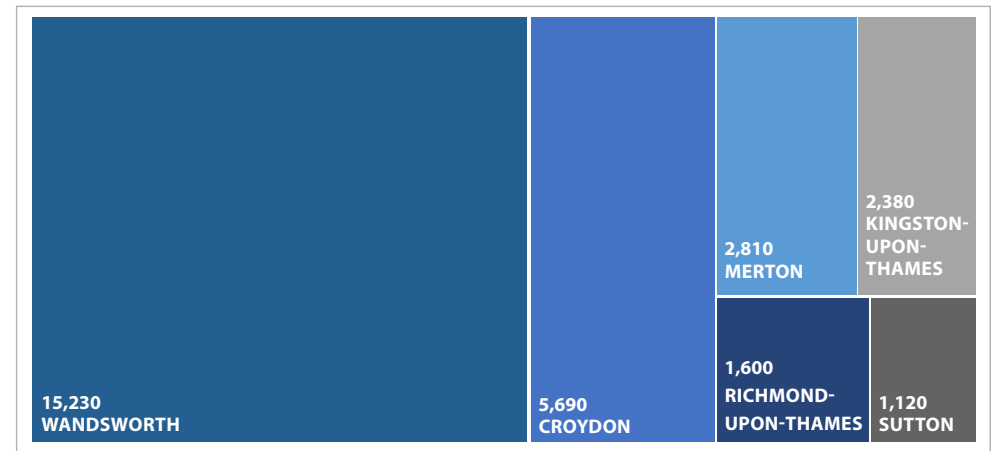


- Solid brick mansion blocks & converted street properties
- Solid brick terrace
- 1950s to 1975 system /cavity-built blocks
- 1983s to 2002 mid-rise flats
- Homogenous housing estate
- Solid brick non-terrace
- Built from 2007
- Suburban cavity semis/detached with gas boilers

**Figure 3:** Key archetypes in Richmond (from the eight categories which make up 92% of the London housing stock)

## Skills demand

A critical barrier to progress is the gap in retrofit skills within the construction industry. The current workforce lacks the necessary expertise and capacity to carry out retrofitting on a large scale, making upskilling a priority to ensure both the technical proficiency and workforce availability needed to meet the ambitious goals of retrofitting in the borough.



**Figure 4:** Total construction labour demand by borough in person-years

## Resident engagement

Specific to Richmond is the context of highly engaged residents who are passionate about retrofit and the eagerness to support decarbonisation of housing within the borough. This is evidenced through their attendance at Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sport Committee to speak to the issues surrounding retrofit, resulting in the establishment of the Policy Performance Review Board (PPRB) task and finish group focused on domestic retrofit. It can also be seen as an emerging theme through the engagement to develop the Richmond Climate and Nature Strategy.

# Introduction & context

## National and London policy

The 2021 Sustainable Development Goals report states that SDG 7.3 energy efficiency can only be achieved through fabric and energy system retrofits ([ref](#)). The European Commission proposed a target of 60% reduction in buildings' greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to align with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) target of limiting average global temperature increase to 1.5°C ([ref](#)).

UK housing stock is considered to be one of the least energy efficient in Europe, accounting for approximately 17% of national emissions. The government's Net Zero Strategy recognises the need for retrofit skills and localised advice to reach the 2050 target, which coupled with the commitment to being a Clean Energy Superpower to accelerate to net zero, shows the recognised national context to this work. In delivering clean power by 2030, there are plans to build a diverse low carbon energy system, with the clean energy mission plans to use natural resources to keep bills down for good, helping to address the 3.1 million households living in fuel poverty ([ref](#)). The government's Warm Homes Plan commits to retrofitting 5 million homes over five years as well as increasing minimum energy efficiency standards for privately and socially rented homes ([ref](#)), adding complexity to the challenges at the local level.

It is estimated that 36% of London's emissions are generated from its homes, the Greater London Authority and London Councils therefore recognise the need for a vast majority of London's building stock to be retrofitted to high levels of energy efficiency by 2050 ([ref](#)). The Mayor of London and London Councils aim to achieve an average EPC of B for London's social housing by 2030. This delivery has so far been slow, there is a need for a 15-fold increase in the rate of retrofit if this is to be achieved ([ref](#)). To accelerate progress a new 'London Office for Retrofit' has been proposed which would coordinate and enhance support for retrofit ([ref](#)). The 2021 London Plan also emphasises the need for housing retrofit to address carbon emissions as well as 'futureproofing' to build resilience to the climate crisis ([ref](#)).

## Local policy

Richmond's Climate Emergency Strategy highlights the necessity of domestic retrofit to reduce the borough's emissions ([ref](#)). The Council will lead by example through the decarbonisation strategy which includes the retrofit of all Council buildings, making the organisation carbon neutral by 2030. This strategy therefore will align with the current strategies and policies in place which share the aim of achieving a Net Zero borough by 2043 and improving the quality of life for its residents. This strategy will develop the local policy landscape, outlining how Richmond will contribute to the regional and national retrofit targets.

The Richmond Local Plan also recognises the potential for borough-wide retrofit to mitigate climate change by reducing domestic carbon dioxide emissions as well as being essential to adapt to the impacts of climate change and build the borough's resilience ([ref](#)). This strategy will help to lay out how the retrofit envisaged in the Local Plan can be realised.

# Strategy aims



## A Vision for Retrofit in Richmond

Our vision is to transform Richmond into a beacon of sustainability and resilience by implementing a borough-wide retrofit strategy that improves energy efficiency, reduces carbon emissions, and promotes environmental stewardship. We aim to achieve this through a collaborative, data-driven approach that engages and empowers our residents and communities, supports economic growth, while ensuring equity and inclusivity for all residents.

By leveraging funding, fostering green skills development and communicating about the benefits and opportunities of retrofit, we will create healthier, more comfortable homes and buildings. Our commitment to long-term investment and consistent support will drive the transition to a low-carbon future, helping Richmond to achieve its goal of being a net zero borough by 2043.

Together, we will build a greener, more resilient Richmond, where every resident benefits from the positive impacts of retrofit and net zero.

## The aim of the Richmond Retrofit Strategy

The retrofit strategy exists to consolidate our organisational understanding on the work needed to fill the gap on retrofit to meet our 2030 and 2043 targets respectively. The focus of this document is to lay out where responsibilities sit for this work and understand the direct role and influencing capability of Richmond Council. As part of this strategy, we will demonstrate the linkages with ongoing decarbonisation work and map out the services and stakeholders working in this area, bringing all officers to the same baseline understanding. Taking this information into account, this strategy will set out Richmond Council's approach to

retrofitting and set priorities for the five identified focus areas, bridging the gap in national guidance on retrofit and addressing the complexity of retrofit locally.

## Underpinning Themes

The Richmond Retrofit Strategy is underpinned by several overarching themes that guide it. These themes are:

- **Reducing Carbon Emissions:** The primary goal of the strategy is to reduce energy use and carbon emissions across the borough through improving energy efficiency in buildings, integrating renewable energy sources, and moving away from fossil fuel-driven heating and power.
- **Community Engagement and Collaboration:** Engaging with residents, landlords, local businesses, and community organisations to increase knowledge and take-up of retrofit using transparent communication, stakeholder involvement, and building trust within the community.
- **Equity and Inclusivity:** Ensuring that all residents, regardless of their economic status, have access to the benefits of retrofit projects, including providing financial support and incentives for low-income households and ensuring that retrofit measures do not disproportionately impact vulnerable populations.
- **Opportunities for Green Jobs:** Creating job opportunities in the retrofit sector that support the growth of a skilled workforce.
- **Taking a Sustainable Approach:** Addressing multiple wider aspects of sustainability, including biodiversity, reducing carbon emissions and waste from construction and, importantly, ensuring that retrofit builds the resilience of buildings in the borough to a changing climate.

## Strategy aims

- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Using data and evidence to inform the selection of target areas, measuring the success of retrofit projects, and refining our approach over time.
- **Long-Term Commitment and Consistency:** Ensuring that funding and support for retrofit projects are consistent and sustained over the long term, avoiding the 'ebb and flow' pattern of funding that can undermine community trust and project continuity.
- **Policy Alignment and Coherence:** Aligning work on retrofit strategy with broader Council policies and strategies, such as the Richmond Climate Emergency Strategy, the Decarbonisation Strategy and the Local Plan, ensuring that the impact of retrofit across the borough is maximised.

# Retrofit Co-Benefits



Retrofit addresses the three pillars of sustainable development through its wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits, detailed below.

## Social benefits

Retrofitting a building can reduce the impact of extreme high and low temperatures, in turn reducing the impact of cold homes on the numbers of excess winter deaths. The Institute of Health Equity ([ref](#)) estimates that 21.5% of excess winter deaths are directly attributable to cold homes. Installing retrofit measures also contributes to cleaner home environments through improved ventilation, reducing prevalence of several health conditions including respiratory issues, cardiovascular disease and hypertension. Improving home living conditions has the potential to affect significant health and mental health improvements for residents, which reduces pressures on local health services. Improved health from retrofit could reduce NHS costs by around £1.4 billion annually ([ref](#)), for every £1 spent on retrofitting homes in fuel poverty, the NHS saves £0.42 ([ref](#)). Furthermore, benefits from air quality improvements associated with energy efficiency have a value of £4.1 billion from avoided health issues ([ref](#)).

## Economic benefits

More efficient homes could reduce energy bills by around £234 per year ([ref](#)) for residents, which could help tackle the 8.8% of homes in Richmond which are in fuel poverty ([ref](#)). Retrofitted homes are likely to increase in value due to their increased EPC rating, offering a return on investment for homeowners and landlords. In order to meet the demand for retrofit, new green jobs would be created and in turn, boost economic growth, through increasing the demand for

green technologies and sustainable construction. It is estimated that 2210 retrofit jobs would be needed within Richmond to meet demand ([ref](#)).

## Environmental Benefits

In Richmond, domestic property makes up 44.7% of the total emissions produced in the borough. Reducing these emissions will drastically improve indoor and outdoor air quality and the associated health issues. By opting to retrofit homes we avoid the carbon intensive processes of demolition and redevelopment, tackling the issue of embodied carbon. Retrofit over building new can save over 68% of embodied carbon. Improvements to existing urban infrastructure rather than building on undeveloped land can help protect valuable green spaces.

Installing retrofit measures on homes can address climate adaptation, futureproofing them to withstand extreme conditions and building the residents' resilience to climate change which aligns with the Council's Adaptation and Resilience Strategy. Mapping that has taken place as part of the Council's Climate Risk Map can be utilised to identify priority areas where vulnerability to climate hazards (including temperature extremes) is highest, in order to prioritise retrofit and increase their resilience to climate shocks.

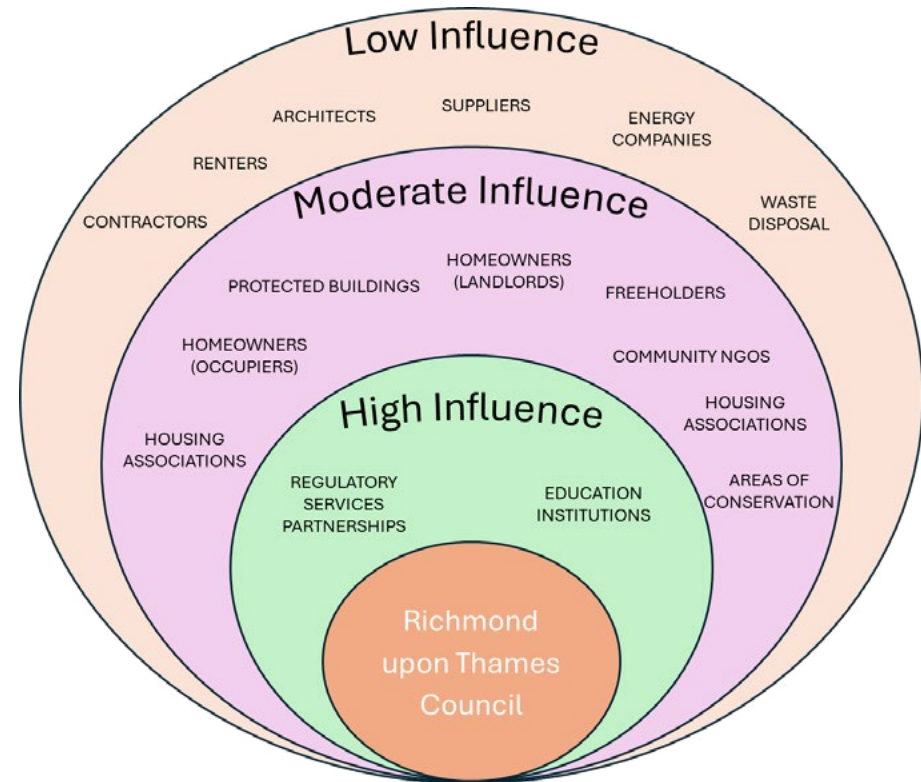
# Stakeholders

To effectively retrofit to meet our climate commitments, many stakeholders need to be included and built into our approach. The responsibility to decarbonise our buildings sits exclusively within Richmond Council's remit. Influencing and effecting retrofit within privately owned and rented homes falls within Richmond Council's area of influence.

Figure 5 below demonstrates the relevant stakeholders for retrofitting, mapping them based on their perceived degree of control and influence from the Council perspective. This in turn informs how we engage and manage these stakeholders within our Council approach.

Effective stakeholder management will help maximise the outcomes of the Retrofit Strategy, enabling the development of strategies that increase the interest of influential stakeholders, and increase the influence of interested stakeholders ([ref](#)).

Due to the complexity and technicality of retrofit, 'trusted' partners will be vital in reassuring homeowners/social housing partners. The need for high levels of co-ordination across various stakeholders means that local/combined authority leadership will be essential to facilitate home retrofit. Overcoming the barriers to home retrofit requires a holistic approach, with a London and borough-wide strategy, progress can be made. ([ref](#))



**Figure 5:** Spheres of influence stakeholder map. Map showing the level of influence that Richmond Council has over the relevant stakeholders.

# Stakeholders

## 2.1 Local Authority

Richmond Council is committed to retrofitting and understands the importance of progressing this to meet our climate targets. Retrofit would also contribute to the Council's goals of improving residents' wellbeing, building the borough's resilience to climate change, and diversifying the local economy; it also has the potential to build trust and improve the Council's relationship with its residents.

Richmond Council has high levels of interest in retrofit, however the level of influence over stakeholders shown in Figure 5 is limited. Whilst the Council has no authority over other stakeholders, they do have the resources that can encourage wider retrofit. Richmond Council has a responsibility to provide and share information to engage other stakeholders and enable them to participate. The Council can act as facilitators, bringing together individuals and groups in the borough who are interested in realising the retrofit strategy. The Council are also able to encourage the development of retrofit skills in the borough through its influence in the education sector, therefore increasing the borough's capacity to deliver a retrofit at scale. The Council can increase retrofit uptake through incentives to residents and retrofit contractors and has in place enforcement powers through the Regulatory Services Provider to enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in homes with a dedicated officer to this position.

## 2.2 Social Housing provider

Richmond Council does not own any social housing, instead working with housing associations as registered providers (also known as registered social landlords) such as Richmond Housing Partnership Limited (RHP) and PA Housing. These providers are approved and registered by Richmond Council, who work closely with the providers to ensure that social housing standards are met. Social housing is subject to a degree of government control through its regulatory frameworks that ensure housing is of sufficient quality, such as the Decent Homes Standard. However, as demand for affordable housing has increased, social housing providers have become more reliant on private investment and are therefore also

subject to the conditions of private investment which is likely to prioritise return on investment over energy efficiency of housing ([ref](#)). Funding is often the limiting factor for actions that go beyond meeting the relevant regulatory requirements. Therefore, the influence of social housing providers over retrofit is limited by funding and the interests of private investors.

## 2.3 Private Landlords

Private landlords are subject to regulations set by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure tenants have a decent standard of living. The government have now confirmed that the Decent Homes Standard that applies to social housing will now be extended to private renting housing, this means that private landlords will be held to higher standards than previously ([ref](#)). Private landlords, however, have very little motivation to undertake actions that go beyond minimum requirements for retrofit due to the 'split incentive'; landlords would be responsible for the high upfront costs of retrofit without receiving the direct benefits such as improved thermal comfort and lower energy bills. Landlord's primary reason for renting properties is profit and therefore putting investment into a property that they will not see a return on may not be even financially logical. There is some evidence that property price increases with EPC value and that renters prefer housing with higher EPC values; however, in London where rented properties are in very high demand residents will accept lower standards in the homes in order to be able to rent in London. This is exacerbated by high numbers of residents who were born outside of the UK who are less aware of the living standards that they are entitled to ([ref](#)). Furthermore, landlords face uncertainty created by frequent policy changes, risking beginning works which are no longer supported by the Government.

## 2.4 Homeowner (occupier)

Unlike rented housing, homeowner occupiers are not subject to any energy efficiency standards. Therefore, the Council has no enforcement powers that can require retrofit of privately owned and occupied homes. Owner occupiers would directly receive the benefits of a retrofit including lower energy bills, improved thermal comfort and health, lower emissions and increased value and longevity of the property. However, homeowners also face multiple barriers to retrofit including the high upfront costs, high level of disruption and time needed to plan and organise retrofit works. Furthermore, there is a lack of information about retrofit options and a lack of trust both in the government and in contractors on the success or outcomes of retrofit. Richmond borough has one of the oldest populations in London, with more older established families ageing in place, and as such a higher proportion of homeownership without a mortgage.

## 2.5 Renters

Residents renting within Richmond face multiple barriers to undertaking retrofit on their homes including the disruption, potential increase in cost to enable the landlord to finance retrofit, and lack of acceptance of new technology. However, the most important barrier is the lack of agency or power that they have in the decision-making process. Ultimately renters have minimal control over their home and therefore it is a Council priority to target landlords to raise awareness and understanding of the benefits and process to retrofit, and to mitigate some of the risk to retrofitting.

## 2.6 Charities and Not-For-Profits

Energy charities or not-for-profits such as SW Leap assist residents within the borough by directly providing energy/retrofit advice and funding or directing residents to funding they might be eligible for. They therefore have a significant role in encouraging and enabling retrofit within the borough. Not-for-profits' influence over retrofit is limited by their social and economic capital however,

the Council would benefit from working with them; not-for-profits usually work more closely within the community and are therefore a more trusted source of information for the residents. As a not-for-profit and non-political organisation they are perceived as having more integrity and honourable motivations than local government ([ref](#)).

## 2.7 Installers

While undertaking home renovations or refurbishment contractors are trusted sources of information for homeowners (occupiers or landlords). During a renovation the homeowner has already committed to spending money and accepting disruption to their day-to-day lives and therefore there is an opportunity for contractors to encourage homeowners to install energy efficiency retrofit options as well, such as putting insulation in an extension, or installing a heat pump instead of a gas boiler upgrade. It is therefore vital that the Council connects with contractors to encourage retrofit within the 'able-to-pay' market. Furthermore, the Council must work to build trust between homeowners and contractors, potentially encouraging contractors to undergo certification and directing homeowners to resources that validate trusted traders.

## 2.8 Energy Companies

Being one of the first companies to innovate and reduce carbon dioxide emissions from homes could make an energy company a market leader with a larger market share as well as improve the company's image if they are seen to be investing in green solutions.

# Stakeholders

## 2.9 Construction Industry

Stakeholders within the construction industry such as contractors, architects and suppliers may see benefits from encouraging retrofit such as having more business opportunities. However, if funding for retrofit and therefore uptake of retrofit ebbs and flows this may be unreliable business therefore deterring suppliers from investing into retrofit materials and deterring contractors and architects from investing in upskilling.

## 2.10 Education Institutions

By investing in training and education for green skills in retrofit, education institutions could have the opportunity to contribute to decarbonisation of the borough whilst preparing a workforce with green skills which have long term benefits for the students. However, unstable policy and funding remains a barrier, deterring education institutions from inputting high upfront costs on training and resources for a potentially unreliable job market.



# Retrofit Priorities



In order to address the breadth and scale of retrofit needed within Richmond, this strategy will outline five focus areas of our retrofit work, outlined below, enabling a greater understanding of the complexities of each sub area and developing a tailored programme of work.

1. Privately owned and rented housing
2. Place-based approaches
3. Funding
4. Green Skills
5. Retrofit Taskforce

In addition to the focus areas above, this strategy recognises the importance of three themes which impact all focus areas and need consideration throughout. These are biodiversity, embodied carbon and adaptation, outlined below.

Delivering on our retrofit strategy must not come at the cost of compromising on other elements of our climate action plan. One important aspect that must be considered throughout the retrofit process is biodiversity, which is essential for the long-term sustainability and ecological health of Richmond. This strategy commits to considering and maintaining biodiversity throughout its retrofit delivery within areas of direct control, as well as within its advice and guidance to residents. Retrofit of housing has the potential to be highly disruptive not only to the residents but to local fauna and flora. While improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon footprints is the primary goal, domestic retrofit also presents an opportunity to integrate nature into built environments, enhancing habitat for local wildlife and supporting ecosystems. By incorporating interventions

such as bat bricks and green roofs, Richmond Council can mitigate habitat loss, promote pollinator populations, and reduce the urban heat island effect. This approach not only boosts resilience to climate change but also fosters a healthier, more biodiverse urban environment, ultimately improving the quality of life for residents. To this end, we will explore conducting additional biodiversity surveys to identify species hotspots and existing habitats, work to include ecologists and prioritise retrofit interventions in our Council directed retrofits, while using existing data on borough biodiversity to offer targeted support and advice to homeowners to protect existing species.

Recognising the role of embodied carbon within our buildings' emissions shapes the delivery of our retrofit strategy, looking to avoid demolition and redevelopment and facilitating reuse of building materials. Embodied carbon is a crucial consideration in delivering our retrofit strategy because retrofitting is vital to reduce the borough's carbon emissions, but without addressing embodied carbon, the overall carbon reduction may be limited. Many retrofit projects involve the use of new materials and construction processes that can significantly contribute to carbon emissions. By considering embodied carbon, we can make more sustainable choices, opting for reuse of building materials and low-carbon materials, and utilising efficient construction methods that reduce the carbon footprint over the entire lifecycle of buildings. This approach is vital for us to minimise environmental impacts and promote long-term sustainability in Richmond. We will explore the feasibility of partnerships to enable reuse of building materials and work alongside Planning to dissuade demolition where possible.

# Retrofit Priorities

By incorporating climate change adaptation into domestic retrofit, we can ensure that existing housing stock is better equipped to withstand the impacts of the climate crisis. Including adaptation not only reduces the risk of damage to homes and infrastructure but also supports energy efficiency improvements, lowering carbon emissions and utility costs for households meaning that residents will be more socially and financially resilient to the climate crisis. Building retrofit is also an important aspect of the Richmond Adaptation and Resilience Strategy which will support Richmond Council's pledge of delivering a fairer, more compassionate and more sustainable borough by helping the borough adapt and increase its resilience to the impacts of climate change [\(ref\)](#).

The implementation of the Richmond Retrofit Strategy and overall programme of retrofit work will be directed and overseen by the Retrofit Taskforce, a group of relevant officers who have responsibility within their roles to deliver or support retrofit. This group holds responsibility for overseeing all progress on retrofit, and reports into the Climate Change Steering Group.

The taskforce will explore the ways in which the Council are progressing the retrofit of homes and decarbonisation of buildings. The group will establish the metrics of success for borough-wide retrofit, align approaches on retrofit and will monitor their progress throughout the process. The taskforce will explore the potential funding sources and streams of investment that will be necessary to fund the retrofit strategy, as well as aligning with the broader programme of work within the Decarbonisation Strategy to track our progress on building emission reductions towards 2030 and 2043 respectively.

## Privately owned and rented housing

### Where we are and the challenges

The Council's influence on privately owned and rented housing is primarily through incentivising retrofit and, to a lesser extent, enforcement. It is a Council priority to engage owner occupiers and target landlords to raise awareness and

understanding of the benefits and process to retrofit, and to mitigate some of the risk to retrofitting. With the sector spanning owner occupiers, private landlords and renters, we must employ a variety of methods to progress retrofit, with each category facing distinct challenges.

Owner occupiers stand to gain in the long run through installing retrofit measures as with any home improvement investment, particularly in this case the home's emissions and bills lowering, with increased value and longevity. However, there are several barriers to retrofitting within this sector, with a spectrum of residents experiencing these challenges. The will and understanding to retrofit are significant challenges, with many not being aware of the benefits and processes involved in retrofitting or not being in a position to prioritise it. Retrofitting has high upfront costs, a high level of disruption when carrying out the works and requires time needed to plan and organise the works, having identified a trusted installer. Research undertaken through the South London Partnership into barriers to retrofit within the able-to-pay market highlighted that residents prefer to work off local recommendations for installers and measures, recognising that the relatively low prevalence of some retrofit measures can present a challenge through a lack of available information from trusted sources. For those who are committed and able to undertake retrofitting, there is often a perceived planning permission barrier as the process is, or is considered to be, overly confusing and challenging to navigate.

Landlords must maintain homes to a decent standard of living by regulation, with tightened conditions being consulted on in late 2024, to inform a new standard and Renters Rights Bill. However there remains minimal motivation to undertake retrofit measures which go beyond the minimum requirements due to the split incentive, which sees landlords paying upfront for expensive home improvement works while passing on the direct benefits to tenants. Further, these improvements provide an as yet uncertain return on investment due to minimal data on house prices following retrofit installation, discouraging landlords to take the risk given the long payback time and variable housing market. The current variable standards and requirements likely to be imposed on landlords creates uncertainty

# Retrofit Priorities

in the market, dissuading action to be taken due to concerns over further reducing possible profits. This challenge is especially prominent within London, due to the high churn rate and exceptional demand for properties.

With very low-level requirements for privately rented properties, currently EPC E or above, most homes in Richmond upon Thames are compliant and renters have no power over their landlords to demand additional measures in their homes. If landlords are open to progressing home improvements, renters face the impact of disruption and possible rent increases to absorb the costs of installing the home improvements.

## What we have done

To support privately owned and rented housing energy efficiency, we have introduced and run a programme of Warm Home Packs over the past two years, supporting homes with low income and low energy efficiency ratings. These measures have saved almost 1500 households £200 a year on their bills while improving thermal comfort and energy efficiency of homes, raising awareness of the impact of home improvements and reducing associated emissions. This year the project has been expanded to better understand the need amongst residents and test further interventions to best support residents in reducing their household emissions.

We have previously secured government funding to support 212 properties through delivery of the Green Homes Grant, providing up to £10,000 to improve the energy efficiency of privately owned homes with poor energy efficiency and a low household income. We have also supported Solar Together locally, offering solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage as a group-buying scheme. The profile of these schemes and wider awareness around retrofitting are raised through developing and maintaining partnerships locally and attending community events to share information directly with residents. To date, we have mostly focused on low-income poor energy efficiency homes, however we are beginning to explore enforcement action against landlords having been approved funding for a new position within the Regulatory Services Partnership, focusing on

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards enforcement on landlords.

## Areas of focus and action

### Information, support, awareness and behaviour change on retrofit

In order to overcome the barrier of lack of information and to combat misinformation, the Council will create a 'Retrofit Hub'. This will be part of the existing climate hub website, aiming to provide comprehensive information about retrofit options, the cost, benefits, and payback time for retrofit installations, financial support schemes available and the steps residents can take to begin their retrofit journey. It will also signpost residents to where they can find trusted traders. The Hub will also specifically address the common myths or misconceptions surrounding retrofit to actively 'myth bust' and help to alleviate residents' concerns directly. The hub would share archetype-specific information with residents and showcase the latest innovations in retrofit. This could be supported by an online tool to demonstrate home specific action plans for residents, based on their property information, priorities and budget. The hub would be supported by a communications campaign to raise awareness and promote behaviour change, including encouraging professionals to explain the potential energy efficiency measures for residents' development plans, as highlighted through the work of the Policy, Performance and Review Board's Domestic Retrofit Task and Finish Group work conducted throughout 2024.

### Supporting the less able to pay

We will continue to support those who are less able to pay, building on our warm home packs offering and existing cost of living support to further improve homes' energy efficiency. We are also part of a consortium bid for the Warm Homes Local Grant which will see the Council draw down funding to tackle fuel poverty locally. The scheme will run for three to five years, improving the energy efficiency of homes and increasing low carbon heating installations for low-income households.

# Retrofit Priorities

## Enforcement – landlord licensing

Engaging landlords is crucial to affect change within private sector retrofitting. Ensuring all landlords are made aware of likely legislation changes to EPC requirements for rented homes would serve as an early warning to landlords that action is needed, while highlighting the likely increasing costs as demand grows.

The Council will explore using the Greater London Authority's [Rogue Landlord Checker](#) to target the 'worst offenders', landlords that have already been reported to have breached housing legislation. Through this the Council could use its enforcement power to ensure that all rented housing meets the minimum energy efficiency standards (and living standards). Learning from Liverpool City Council's example, Richmond Council could also apply to central government to extend its enforcement powers to require all landlords to hold a licence. The licence would only be granted upon confirmation that the property reaches all minimum standards. To encourage energy efficiency improvements in rented housing, the licence fee would be reduced if the house met a certain standard e.g. had an EPC rating of C or above.

## Planning

To address the perceived barrier of planning permission, Richmond Council will clearly communicate guidelines around the 'permitted development rights' to enable homeowners to undertake retrofit options without the concern over planning permissions. Producing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) would benefit residents and officers in guiding retrofit solutions, which is something we will explore, with consideration to focusing on specific areas of sustainability with crossover with retrofit, for example a Biodiversity SPD and a Sustainable Construction Checklist and planning obligations SPD.

We will endeavour to ensure that planning laws are in favour of retrofit actions, for example favouring heat pumps over boilers when installing energy systems and removing barriers to heat pump installation. This could also include a 'presumption in favour of retrofit', requiring justification for why the demolition

of an existing building is necessary over a retrofit (ref). For Richmond residents living in a listed building or conservation area, obtaining planning permission may be a genuine barrier to retrofitting their homes. Richmond Council already provides free policy advice through email to help overcome this barrier and offers free pre-planning application services for planning proposals which are related to sustainability (including retrofit). Offering free planning advice helps to alleviate the confusion around the planning system and eliminate some of the costs associated with domestic retrofit, so we will work to better advertise this available advice to promote sustainable development. We will explore updating the planning application validation checklist to remove the requirement for an acoustic report where not needed to further remove barriers to retrofit.

## Place-based approach

### Where we are and the challenges

Place-based approaches are collaborative long-term approaches that address a social issue e.g. poor-quality housing stock. They operate in a defined geographic location in order to focus on local needs and the local context, involving multiple stakeholders, such as community and voluntary sector organisations and local businesses, to engage the local communities. A place-based approach is about understanding the issues, interconnections and relationships in a place and coordinating action and investment to provide a tailored solution, improving the quality of life for that community with greater identity and connection to their local environment, alongside co-benefits across a range of outcomes.

Place-based approaches are supported by community energy and heat networks. Community energy is an energy project whereby residents own or participate in the production and/or use of sustainable energy. Profits are re-invested into community power or realised by the members of the project. This means residents are directly involved in energy decisions and have agency over their energy, giving them the opportunity to make more sustainable choices. Community

# Retrofit Priorities

energy contributes to building energy security and independence as well as being more affordable for residents. Heat networks distribute heat or cooling from a central source and deliver it to a variety of customers in a geographic area, avoiding the need for individual boilers or electric heaters in every building. Heat networks use local sources of low-carbon heat and are therefore vital for the UK to reach net zero, with an expected tenfold increase in the amount of heat being supplied from these means between 2023 and 2050. In high density urban areas such as Richmond they are often the lowest cost low carbon heating option. Proposals for a new heat zoning powers and standards are being considered following a consultation which ran until early 2024. This is expected to mean local zoning coordinators which sit within local government, having responsibility for designating areas as heat network zones and enforcing requirements within them.

We have identified areas within Richmond which would be suitable to develop into a place-based approach, but challenges remain in securing funding and commitment for the long term due to the significant amounts of funding required. In order to effectively deliver a place-based approach, community buy-in is required which creates complexity owing to the multiple stakeholders needing to be engaged to ensure a truly tailored deliverable. Managing these stakeholders and their expectations is complex due to the high number of variables, chiefly around securing the funding and the final design.

## What we have done

In partnership with Richmond Housing Partnership (RHP) and housebuilder the Hill Group we are starting a landmark regeneration of Ham Close estate, replacing blocks of flats and building new affordable private housing as well as new public green spaces. Our work so far has involved extensive consultation with the community to ensure that the regeneration meets current and future housing needs and positively impacts the wider community ([ref](#)). This example demonstrates how Richmond Council can utilise a place-based approach that listens to residents' priorities for the place they live and work in, taking feedback from residents, community organisations, businesses and local stakeholders to

shape plans throughout the design and delivery process.

We are working with CREW energy to explore Community energy opportunities locally, raising awareness of the benefits of community energy and building a network of interested businesses, schools, faith and third-sector organisations with a vision to deliver community-led renewable energy.

Both place-based approaches and Community Energy are new areas of work, and so we need to explore best practice from other areas to inform these approaches locally. There is recognition for how a place-based approach could showcase how retrofit can be achieved in mixed residency areas, e.g. a street or block of flats with mixed ownership. Achieving this would help develop a greater understanding of the complexities that underlie a borough-wide retrofit project and therefore is essential for Richmond Council to understand in order to deliver retrofit at scale. It can also help inform estimated budgets for wider scale retrofit while demonstrating the benefits of retrofit to the local community.

## Areas of focus and action

### Identifying pilot areas

Using the Greater London Authority (GLA) London Building Stock Model ([ref](#)) and the Council's Climate Risk Map ([ref](#)), the Council will identify areas within Richmond that would most benefit from retrofitting. This would involve identifying those residential areas with the lowest energy efficiency, with a mixed housing stock (including social housing, private owned, private rented) as well as mixed archetypes (e.g. terraced housing, flats) and the most vulnerable population demographics e.g. those who are income deprived and therefore outside of the 'able to pay' market. The Council will maintain a record of all suitable locations with key metrics and information and review the borough regularly to seek opportunities to include further sites. The Climate Risk Map will be updated at regular intervals to respond to changes within Richmond's built environment and socio-economic profile.

# Retrofit Priorities

## Building partnerships and awareness

Achieving a Net-Zero borough by 2043 will not be possible working only at an individual level, it must be achieved by working collaboratively with all stakeholders to drive place-based retrofit. Collaboration with more trusted organisations will also help to build the Council's credibility and build trust, especially within the community, both with residents and contractors, as it demonstrates that the Council is committed to retrofit in the long term, that funding will not follow the expected 'ebb and flow' pattern, and that retrofit and energy efficiency is work that will continue to be supported by the government. We will work to ensure Council teams work in partnership to best identify areas for this approach, and to learn from the work being undertaken on the Ham estate to engage and design alongside the local community. We will form and develop partnerships with local community organisations and businesses working in the retrofit space to use local expertise and knowledge.

## Identifying and securing funding

We will work alongside the external funding officers within the Policy team to identify and strengthen our applications to funding opportunities, for example net zero neighbourhood proposals with 3Ci. Through maintaining a record of suitable locations to deliver a place-based approach, we will be ready to submit applications for funding. We will proactively engage with the private sector through retrofit events and workshops to understand how to tailor our approach funding bids to demonstrate what is needed and attract the necessary funding, bettering our chances of securing funding.

## Heat networks and community energy

We will continue to work with Crew energy to explore potential to deliver community energy, building on this partnership to create a network of relevant stakeholders to bring about change. We will work in partnership with our social housing team to identify areas for heat networks and seek to learn from existing domestic heat networks within London and beyond to inform our own approach and break down barriers to implementing this.

## Funding

### Where we are and the challenges

Securing adequate and consistent funding is crucial for the successful implementation of the Richmond Retrofit Strategy. There is significant cost associated with achieving the Council's 2030 and 2043 carbon neutral and net zero targets respectively, and as such, the Council needs to explore various funding options to support borough-wide retrofit projects, including government grants, private investments, and innovative financing mechanisms.

We have secured funding previously to deliver the Green Homes Grant and Solar Together schemes via Central Government funding. Some of the challenges we've experienced include ensuring we have a diverse pool of funders, not reliant on a single funding source and ensuring we have sufficient resource to support and raise awareness of any schemes we're funded to ensure they can be expediently delivered to a high standard for residents, and to ensure there is high uptake to make best use of the funding. Maintaining capacity is essential not only for effective and efficient project delivery, but also to ensure we are aware of and applying for funding when it is available. Given the significance and volume required for retrofit within London and nationally, funding grants are highly competitive which requires sufficient resource to submit a high-quality bid, to address the challenge of maintaining a steady flow of funding. Oftentimes the funding is time limited and restricted to strict criteria, meaning several short-term, overlapping projects which does not support a whole systems approach, or which only offer part funding, meaning residents need to provide funding or secure a second funding source to enable the work.

### What we have done

So far, we have brought in significant amounts of funding to support retrofit within Richmond upon Thames. While this is small in terms of the total needed, it has brought about real improvements for residents. The Green Homes Grant Local

# Retrofit Priorities

Authority Delivery scheme has seen improvements to low energy efficiency and low-income homes. We have also been successful in delivering funding for cavity wall insulation through ECO3 to 170 tenanted and leasehold properties.

Our cost-of-living funding has seen our Warm Home Packs project continued for the second year, distributing to more than 1400 households to reduce energy bills through improved energy efficiency.

## Areas of focus and action

### Council funding

Capital funding available via the Richmond Climate Emergency Strategy allocation is prioritised for decarbonisation works of our buildings. We will work to ensure bids are using this route to secure funding where possible, for as many projects as possible. We will consider opportunities for innovative funding models within the Council to create ringfenced funding for retrofit within our areas of responsibility, while also exploring options to support funding for private households to carry out retrofitting.

### Government grant-based funding

We will work alongside the external funding team to explore and develop bids for Government grant funding, ensuring we are working to secure funding when it becomes available. This will be supported by a consistent campaign with residents on retrofitting, its benefits and the process needed to create high interest in retrofit to best enable high take up in response to grant funding. We will explore highlighting success stories as part of our communications campaign to further raise the profile of this work and ensure retrofit becomes a known and accessible concept for residents.

### Community based and private funding

We will explore opportunities to partner with the private sector to create public private partnerships to meet investment demand for retrofit within Richmond. We

will prioritise positioning ourselves competitively to attract funding to leverage in private investment for retrofitting through place-based approaches, for example 3Ci. We will work to create opportunities for Area-Based Insetting to drive action locally and to be able to demonstrate the benefits remaining within the borough. We will explore partnering opportunities to facilitate resident investments to fund retrofit works within the borough and consider, where possible, utilising low-cost finance options to fund clean energy projects.

We will work to strengthen our relationships with community-based groups and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to utilise these connections to build trust and share information.

## Green Skills

### Where we are and the challenges

Retrofit requires skilled workers of which there is currently a shortage. A study by the South London Partnership (table 2, page 10) demonstrated the demand for retrofit skills within the partnership and London-wide, showing how future demand significantly exceeds the current supply chain capacity, which will only be exacerbated further if law changes require all properties to be a minimum of EPC C by 2030. A study on the [Whole House Retrofit \(WHR\) and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator \(SHDF\(D\)\)](#) found that costs for place-based retrofits were higher than expected partially due to an insufficient workforce, also causing delays in the retrofit process. Increasing costs of retrofit further amplifies the barrier of high upfront costs for homeowners and social housing providers. Furthermore, if contractors are in high demand to maximise their profits, the quality of retrofit works may decrease in favour of time saving if they have minimal competition that encourages higher standards.

Construction companies and skilled workers do not see consistency in the funding and demand for retrofit and therefore are hesitant to invest the time and money in upskilling workers. Richmond Council needs to show that there will be

# Retrofit Priorities

long-term demand for retrofit skills through consistent promotion and funding. Showcasing a long-term demand for retrofit skills would also encourage education providers (including further and higher education) to invest in education and training in these areas. The Council will explore funding to demonstrate the long-term demand for these skills to incentivise education facilities to invest in training within these areas. We will also work to promote and include an apprenticeship scheme within the construction industry through requiring contractors working within Council buildings or projects to hire apprentices. This would improve understanding of the need and value of green careers and in the process encourage more young people to work in this industry. Currently there is a recognised educational gap within schools and colleges around green skills, meaning these industries and trades are not recognised as viable career paths.

## What we have done

In late 2023, Richmond joined a new collaboration with the South London Partnership (boroughs of Croydon, Sutton, Merton, Kingston & Wandsworth) and was successful in obtaining DESNZ funding to accelerate retrofit skills in the sub region. This enabled Richmond to join forces with multi-sector partners including tier-1 construction firms, housing, education and training providers to create a South London Retrofit Skills Action plan (January 2024), written in partnership with the University of Roehampton and subsequently a series of 20 pilot projects. The RetrofitSkills.org website for the sub-region was created as a one-stop shop to illustrate skills pathways, linked to local training providers, and to promote a series of SME and future supply chain audiences to discover opportunities available to them within Richmond and the immediate surroundings. Pilots included a large Retrofit Skills Summit in May for residents, practitioners and school children to discover the scale of opportunities available in South London, a curriculum pilot between South Thames Colleges Group and the University of Roehampton's Sustainable Engineering and Technology Centre (SETEC) to better design a complementary offering for the subregion to meet the increasing needs, the creation of a South London Retrofit Taskforce, a large stakeholder roundtable

which co-created the South London Retrofit Roadmap (June 2024), a webinar video series (including a local expert), and a series of new training pilots exploring new delivery methods (such as micro-credentials) to boost uptake. 1,135 existing SME supply chain businesses were identified in Richmond as critical to the skills delivery around retrofit and these businesses were targeted twice via direct mailings, encouraging to visit the RetrofitSkills.org centre and join events such as a public & private procurement supply chain event in June 2024. Richmond continues to drive this initiative locally with the current and potential supply chain and use the multiple channels and resources available through the partnership including the new Retrofit Careers House pathway tool.

## Areas of focus and action

### Partnership working

Richmond Council will continue to work in partnership on a sub-regional level as part of the South London Partnership 'Retrofit Taskforce' working to develop the Skills & Workforce workstream as outlined in the South London Retrofit Roadmap Report (June 2024) which outlined the following focus priorities: educating and engaging the market; skills and the workforce; research and innovation; finance and funding; policy, planning and structure; and data.

Regionally, with support of the new London Office for Retrofit and working alongside London Councils and the Greater London Authority, Richmond will be ready to mobilise a workforce as part of the Warmer Homes: Social Housing and the Warmer Homes: Local Grant schemes and ensure the Social Value components, particularly those related to skills development, are realised within our borough.

### Developing Careers Pathways

Working alongside education providers and at the sub-regional level as part of the South London Partnership Green Skills Academy, we will work to embed green skills within schools' career advice. We will explore opportunities to further this awareness raising through attending careers and job fairs for students,

# Retrofit Priorities

young people, adults and those looking to return to work. Where possible we will work with education providers to run sessions and workshops for adults to demonstrate the long-term demand for green skills and to highlight the training and development opportunities within this sector. These experiences will be used as best practice examples of how to begin a career within retrofit, enabling others to learn about it and working to meet the demand for these skills. This work will align with priorities within Richmond's employment and skills strategy, looking to develop awareness of green skills work.

## Engagement and awareness raising

To demonstrate the demand and opportunities within retrofit, we will proactively engage with education providers and residents to raise the profile, importance and future of green skills in retrofit. We will use our position and existing partnerships to present information to residents and local businesses to showcase the opportunities within this sector, sparking economic growth and a strengthened supply and delivery chain.

## Retrofit Taskforce

### Where we are and the challenges

With the work of retrofit spanning many teams within, and organisations beyond, Richmond Council, it is crucial we are collaborating, aligning and sharing our best practice to ensure we can effectively and efficiently decarbonise our buildings by 2030, and influence the retrofitting of our borough's buildings by 2043.

We have made progress but there remains a significant amount of work needed to meet these targets. Existing Council funding does not cover the works needed and significant barriers prevent resident awareness and uptake of retrofit which must be addressed. Furthermore, with our social housing being provided through registered providers, we have to work to better engage these providers to ensure the standard of home needed is provided to our residents, and that this standard

evolves in line with our climate targets and national legislation.

Internally, the work to decarbonise our buildings sits across multiple teams with varying degrees of responsibility. Similarly, the officers working towards retrofit span multiple teams, directorates, areas of focus and with varying seniority. To enable us to best deliver for our residents, we should work closely together to share best practice and information to shape our retrofit programmes, recognising that presenting a unified approach creates trust in the information we are providing to partners and residents. We have to ensure oversight of these workstreams is maintained with senior leadership buy-in to help establish progress and navigate barriers when they emerge.

### What we have done

We have worked with the South London Partnership (SLP) to conduct research into the barriers to retrofit within the able-to-pay market, establishing different behaviour groups of users within our residents and their approaches to retrofitting. Based on this research, an internal retrofit workshop was held with senior leadership to baseline knowledge and understanding of retrofit across the organisation, bringing decision makers together to recognise the extent of the challenge we face and agree to the components needed to address the retrofit challenge.

We have actively participated in the PPRB task and finish group meetings throughout 2024 to better understand the concerns and insights of residents in order to shape our approach to retrofit, directly incorporating these insights into the priority areas and actions arising in this strategy. We have built on the research and work supported by the SLP to maintain a network of officers across South London, and have developed a network across London, recognising that challenges and insights exist beyond our borough boundaries and that we can mutually benefit from acknowledging best practice and learning from trials of emerging technologies. We continue to work with the London Office of Technology and Innovation to raise the profile of the work we are doing and to

# Retrofit Priorities

identify opportunities for shared approaches where possible. Our partnership working has enabled us to draw in funding to develop our retrofit insights and approach, meaning we better understand our borough's context and can address the challenges and opportunities accordingly.

Building on this workshop, senior officers were engaged through the Climate Change Steering Group to agree to the establishment of the retrofit taskforce; a group of officers with expertise in, or direct responsibility for, the retrofit of our buildings. This group was established in late 2024 with representation from the Energy and Sustainability team, the Regulatory Services Partnership, skills and employment colleagues, the Climate Change and Sustainability team and the Places directorate.

## Areas of focus and action

### Increasing organisational capacity to deliver retrofit

We have to ensure there is sufficient resource internally which is dedicated to, and responsible for, the retrofit of properties within Council control, and beyond, to meet our climate targets. This resource needs to be knowledgeable and skilled in relevant retrofit capabilities, such as a dedicated Community Retrofit Officer, with backing at the senior level across the organisation to ensure the profile and importance of this work is raised. Any gaps in resource should be identified and addressed, with training prioritised to support this work.

Recognising the scale of this challenge and the available officer resource to address it, we have to ensure collaboration is central to our retrofit approach to ensure an efficient and effective use of our resource. We will build on the retrofit taskforce to continue to bring together stakeholders and teams to deliver against the priorities within this strategy, while exploring the development of a set of potential targets for domestic retrofit to monitor and guide this work.

### Engaging social housing providers

Crucial to the progress towards our climate targets will be engaging and supporting social housing providers in decarbonising their housing stock. We will explore opportunities to engage with all our housing providers to listen and understand the challenges to retrofitting. Community Ambassadors should be engaged as a means to raise awareness of the value of retrofitting and to support trusted information reaching residents, and for information and concerns from residents to be fed into the taskforce and Richmond Council's retrofit approach.

### Partnership working

The challenges and opportunities of retrofit are evolving as technologies and monitoring from trial measures and pilot schemes are shared. Maintaining and strengthening our partnership working enables us to benchmark ourselves against other Local Authorities to identify possible further actions and opportunities. The taskforce will look to expand on our existing partnerships to attract funding, working with other local authorities to submit joint bids and liaising with colleagues within the external funding team to strengthen our bids.

We will identify opportunities to collaborate with and support voluntary and community sector partners working in retrofit to remain at the forefront of retrofit interventions, best practice and progress locally. The taskforce will look to engage and work alongside the private sector to strengthen our position in attracting private funding for retrofit, recognising the role this funding source can play in retrofit and the importance of having dedicated officer capacity to effectively make use of funding.



# Richmond Retrofit Strategy



Photos: South\_agency (p8) and Highwaystarz-Photography (p19)  
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