



WANDSWORTH

RETROFIT STRATEGY 2025 - 2030



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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 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 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: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lives in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below. 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 network	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.
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 is a vital document that sets out our borough's commitment to tackling the climate crisis through bold, inclusive, and practical action. Wandsworth Council has long recognised the urgency of climate change and the need to act decisively to reduce our carbon emissions. In line with our commitment to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 and a net zero borough by 2043, this strategy outlines how we will address the most significant contributor to local emissions: our buildings. With domestic properties accounting for nearly half of Wandsworth's total carbon emissions, retrofitting our homes is not only a climate priority but a social, economic, and public health necessity.

Wandsworth Council is responsible for over 17,000 tenanted council properties and has oversight of a portfolio of 33,000 homes in total, including leaseholds. These buildings are central to our community and must be equipped to meet the challenges of a changing climate. Retrofitting them will reduce energy bills, improve thermal comfort, and enhance the health and wellbeing of our residents, particularly those most vulnerable to fuel poverty and poor housing conditions.

We are acutely aware of the scale of this challenge. Retrofitting our council homes to net zero standards will require significant investment, estimated at nearly £474 million. Through this strategy, we commit to a long-term, coordinated approach that

integrates retrofit into our capital works programme, does everything we can to seek innovative funding solutions, and ensures that residents are engaged, informed, and supported throughout.

Beyond social housing, this strategy sets out our approach to retrofitting privately owned and rented homes, recognising the barriers faced by landlords, homeowners, and renters alike. We will provide clear information, strengthen enforcement mechanisms, and work to remove planning obstacles that hinder progress. Our Retrofit Hub will serve as a central resource for residents, offering guidance, myth-busting, and access to trusted contractors.

We also recognise that retrofit is about more than just buildings. That is why we are investing in green skills and workforce development, working with local colleges, universities, and businesses to ensure that Wandsworth residents are aware of, and can access, the training and opportunities needed to deliver retrofit at scale. This strategy aligns with our employment and skills agenda, creating pathways into meaningful, future-focused careers.

Place-based approaches are integral to this strategy. By working with communities to co-design retrofit solutions, we can ensure that interventions are tailored, inclusive, and impactful. Our work on the Alton estate and partnerships with organisations like CREW Energy demonstrate the power of collaboration in delivering sustainable change.

Finally, this strategy is underpinned by our commitment to a whole systems approach and recognises the links to biodiversity, embodied carbon reduction, and climate adaptation. Retrofitting must enhance, not compromise, our natural environment. We will integrate nature-based solutions, prioritise reuse of materials, and ensure that our homes are resilient to the impacts of extreme weather.

The Wandsworth Retrofit Strategy is ambitious, but it is grounded in the realities of our borough. It reflects our values of fairness, sustainability, and community empowerment and I invite all residents, partners, and stakeholders to join us in delivering this vision.



Cllr Judi Gasser
Cabinet Member for Environment
Wandsworth Council

Executive Summary

The London Borough of Wandsworth Retrofit Strategy comprehensively outlines its efforts to improve energy efficiency across the borough's housing stock. This strategy is central to the council's commitment to becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 and achieving borough-wide net zero emissions by 2043. It sets out a clear vision, strategic priorities, and a collaborative framework to address the retrofit challenge, with a particular emphasis on the borough's extensive social housing portfolio.

In 2022, domestic buildings accounted for 42% of Wandsworth's total carbon emissions, underscoring the critical role of housing in achieving climate targets. Retrofitting is essential to reduce emissions, lower energy bills, and improve thermal comfort for residents.

The borough's housing stock is diverse in tenure and archetype, including council-owned homes, a significant number of privately rented units, and owner-occupied dwellings.

Social housing is a cornerstone of the strategy, with 17,400 tenanted properties and a total of 33,000 council-managed homes. Retrofitting this stock is essential to meet climate targets, but presents unique challenges including funding constraints, mixed tenure blocks requiring leaseholder engagement,

and a reactive maintenance model. To address these challenges, the council will develop a long-term social housing retrofit strategy to shape our progress, while monitoring retrofit outcomes, working to secure external funding, engage residents, and build internal capacity.

In addition to social housing, the strategy identifies four other focus areas:

- 1. Private Sector Housing:** The council will launch a Retrofit Hub, expand Warm Home Packs, strengthen landlord licensing schemes, and clarify permitted development rights to encourage retrofit in privately owned and rented homes.
- 2. Place-Based Approaches:** The council will use data to identify pilot areas, engage communities, and explore heat networks and community energy projects to deliver tailored retrofit solutions.
- 3. Funding:** The council will pursue government grants and develop public-private partnerships to secure consistent and diverse funding streams.
- 4. Green Skills:** The council will collaborate with regional partners to embed green skills in education, through promoting apprenticeships and engaging with local businesses to build a skilled retrofit workforce.

The Wandsworth Retrofit Strategy 2025–2030 sets a bold and pragmatic course for achieving borough-wide energy efficiency and climate resilience. With a strong emphasis on social housing, the strategy balances ambition with realism, recognising the financial, technical, and social complexities of retrofit. Wandsworth Council is committed to shaping a borough where homes are warm, energy-efficient, and adapting to the future needs to best deliver for residents while meeting our climate commitments.

Introduction and 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 [ref]. These changes typically impact the fabric of the building (the physical building construction) or the energy system, including the 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 typically more costly and intrusive interventions in a 'deep retrofit', including installing roof, loft, and wall insulation and switching the energy source to an air source or ground source heat pump (ASHP/GSHP). 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.

Retrofitting across Wandsworth is a significant and necessary step to reach the borough's target 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?

Wandsworth Council 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 45.5% of Wandsworth's emissions [ref], presenting significant opportunities to drastically reduce emissions from social and private housing and achieve Net Zero. Due to the significant percentage of emissions in buildings, achieving Net Zero can only be done through borough-wide retrofit.

The scale of the retrofit challenge

The scale of retrofitting housing in the London Borough of Wandsworth presents significant challenges, particularly given the diverse housing stock. Retrofitting properties improves their energy efficiency, and as such, a home's Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is a typical indicator of the need for retrofit. In Wandsworth, over 44% of housing currently has an EPC below EPC C (see figure one), showing the significant portion of the housing stock which requires substantial upgrades to meet our targets for carbon neutral and net zero.



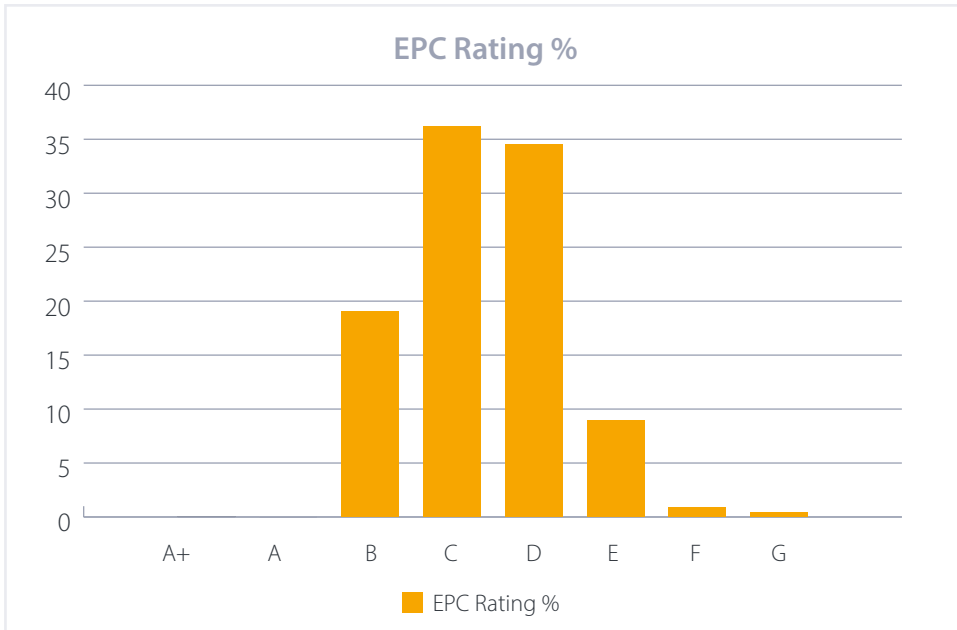


Figure 1: A breakdown of the EPC ratings since 2013 for Wandsworth. EPCs are not available for all of the properties in the borough, but it is estimated that the ones recorded cover approximately 68% of all domestic properties in the Borough's stock, based on the number of buildings in the borough.

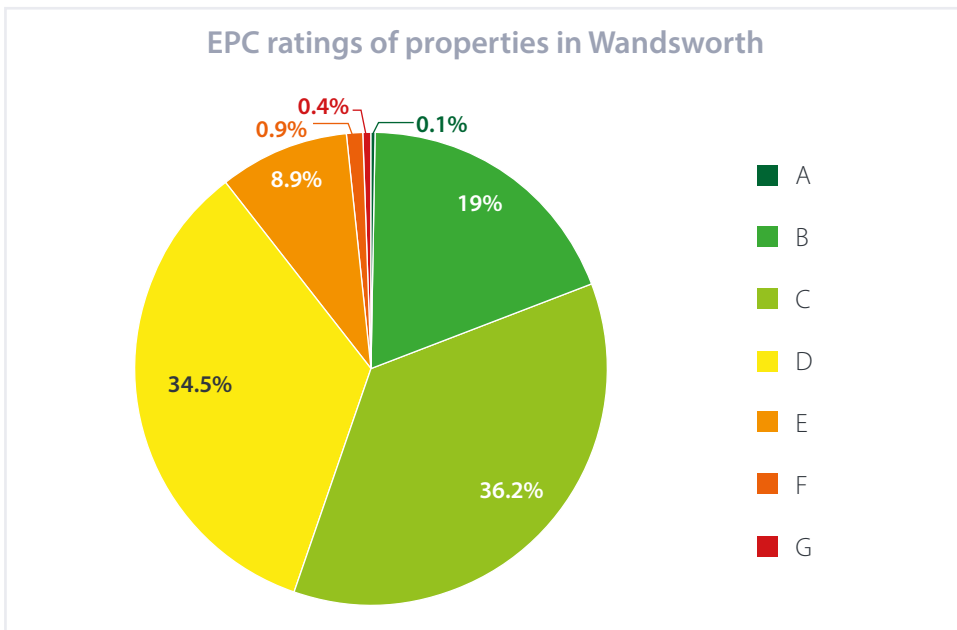


Figure 2: EPC ratings for social housing (council-owned)

Comparing figures one and two shows that EPC ratings for social housing are slightly higher than for privately owned housing with 36% of Wandsworth's Council homes having an EPC rating below C. The SAP rating for Wandsworth's Council homes was 70.57 in 2024, slightly higher than the London and UK average (69 and 68.4 respectively).



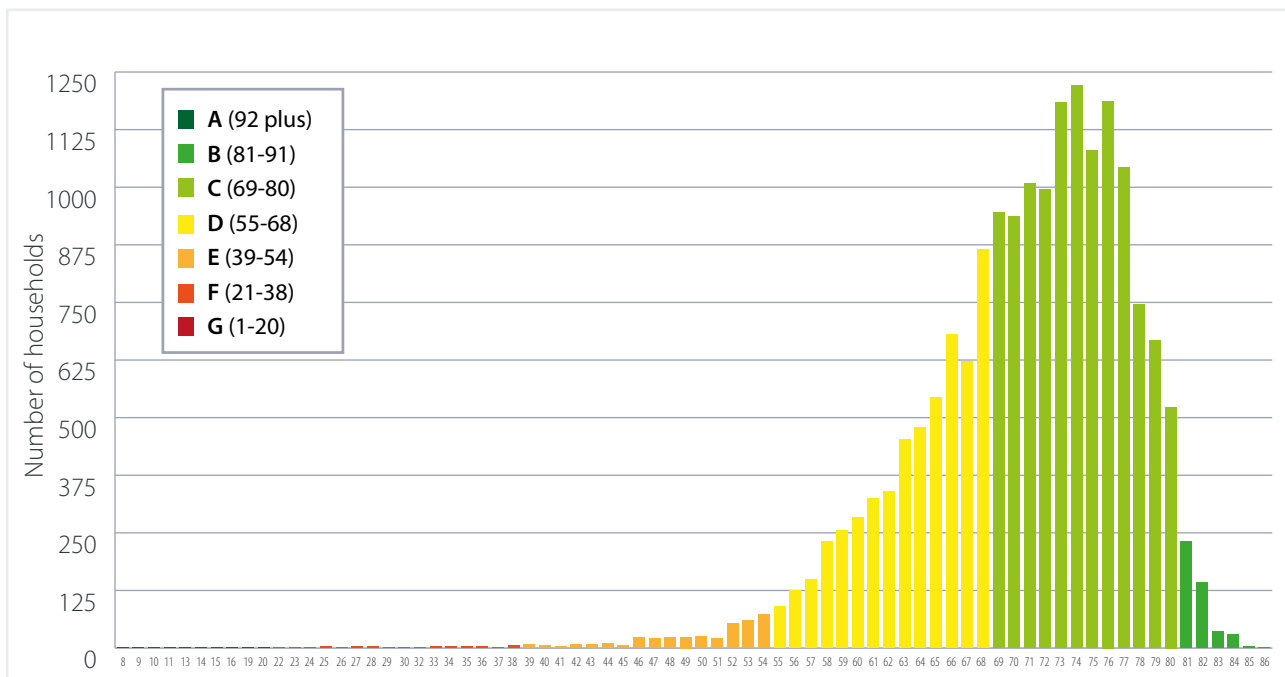


Figure 3: Wandsworth Council Social Housing EPC rating by household [ref].

	Net Zero	EPC C or higher
Retrofit cost (total)	£473,980,000	£25,171,285
Retrofit cost (per property affected)	£27,800	£2,300
Annual carbon reduction achieved (tonnes)	30,587	4,000
Total annual carbon emissions (tonnes)	4,956	29,000
Average SAP score	83	75
Mean fuel bill improvement (per household)	£179.00	£81.00

Table 1: representative costs for 2024 to achieve net zero and EPC C or above in council-owned homes.

Financial cost of improving energy efficiency

To achieve net zero carbon in all council-owned homes would cost almost £474 million, and to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate C-rating would cost £25 million. [ref]

More detailed representative costs are outlined below left:



Tenure and Archetypes

The housing stock includes a mix of tenure types, such as privately owned homes, council housing, and housing association properties, each with different funding and management structures, further complicating retrofit efforts. As shown in Figure 4, a relative majority of housing is privately rented, therefore landlords are a key demographic that the council need to engage with to encourage retrofit in the private sector.

Furthermore, Wandsworth features a variety of housing archetypes laid out in Figure 5, 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.

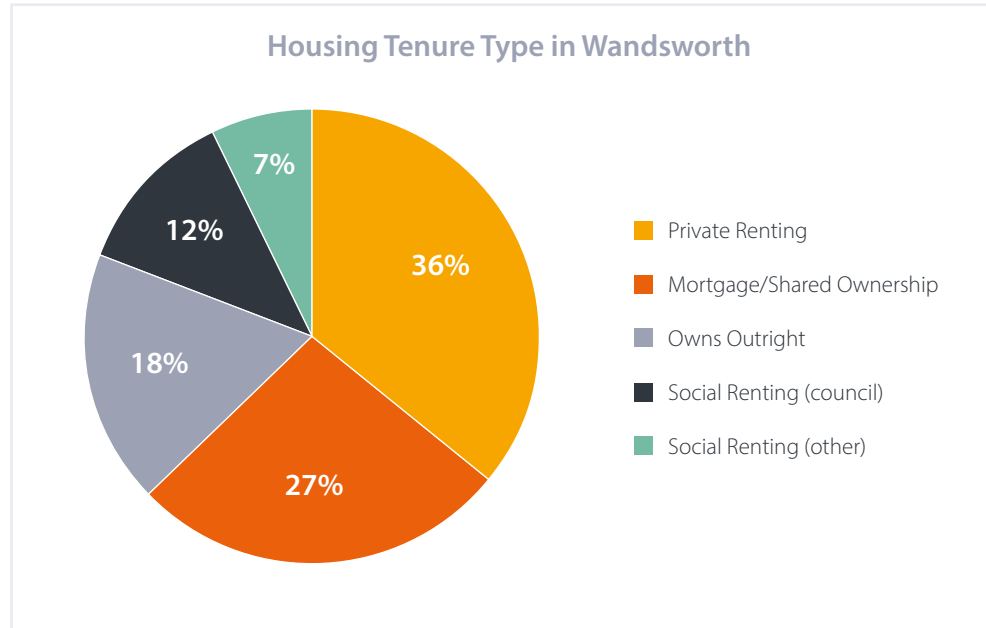


Figure 4: The composition of housing tenure in Wandsworth

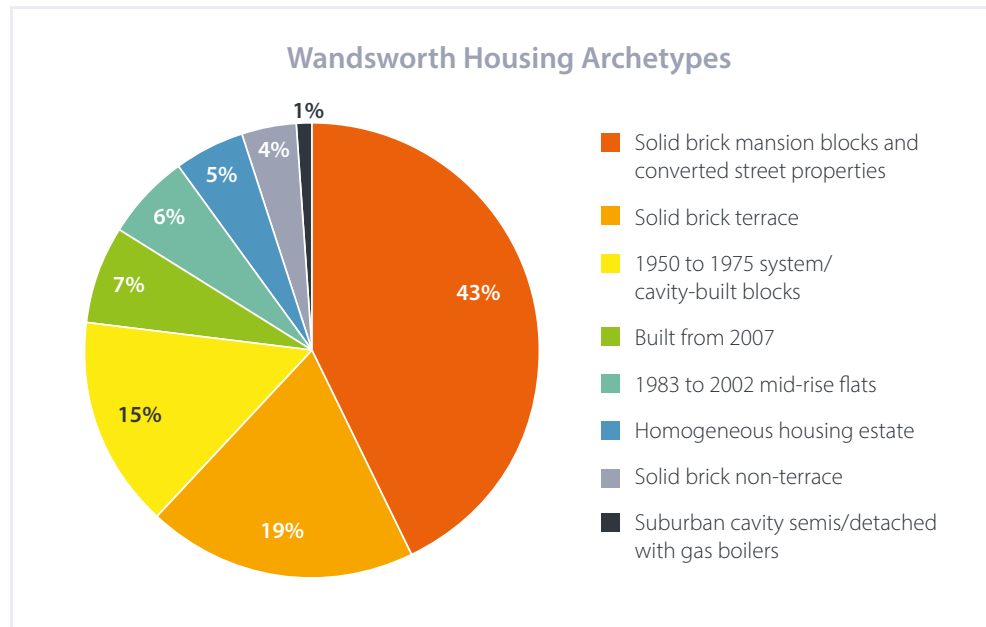


Figure 5: Key archetypes in Wandsworth (from the eight categories which make up 92% of the London housing stock)

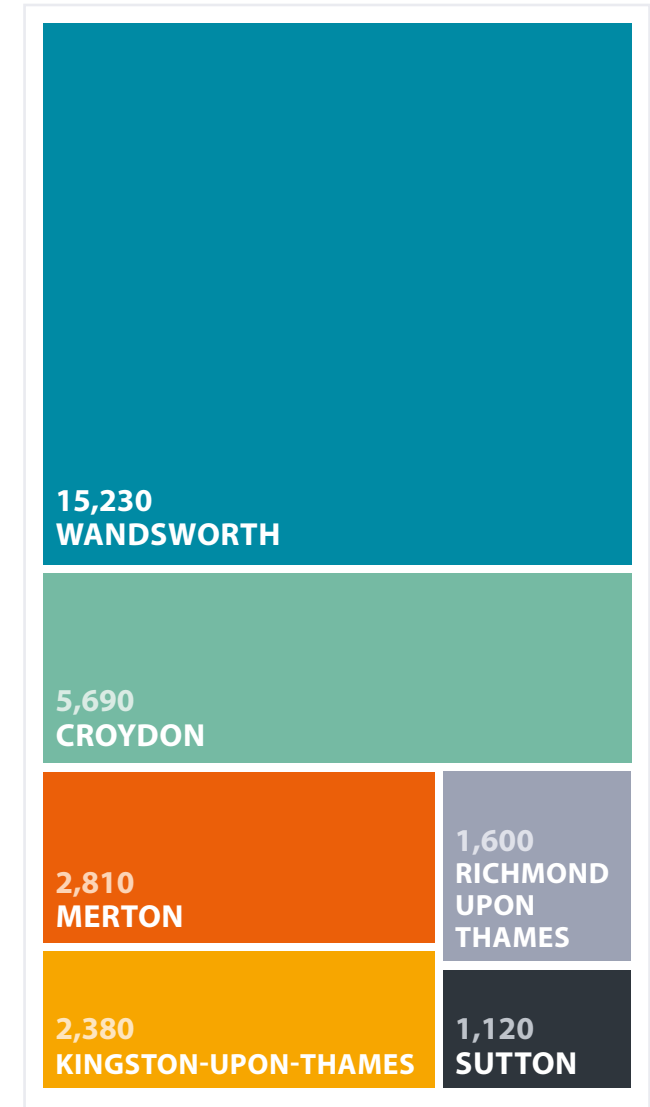
Skills demand

A critical barrier to progress is the gap in retrofit skills within the construction industry. Table 2 showcases the demand for retrofit skills in Wandsworth and London. 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.

Table 2: Key occupational pressures in London averaged for 2022-2026.

Occupation	Average Wandsworth demand	Average demand in London	Average Wandsworth demand as a percentage of the average London demand
Bricklayers	310	5,880	5.3%
Roofers	90	2,310	3.9%
Scaffolders	40	1,150	3.5%
Steel erectors/structural	60	2,240	2.7%
Plant mechanics/fitters	100	3,820	2.6%
Labourers	270	11,660	2.3%
Plumbing and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning trades	360	16,440	2.2%
Other construction professionals and technical staff	530	33,540	1.6%
Floorers	50	3,090	1.6%
Wood trades and interior fit-out	490	32,200	1.5%
Plant operatives	80	5,750	1.4%

Figure 6: Total construction labour demand by borough in person-years



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 Council's aim to achieve an average EPC of B for London's social housing by 2030. This delivery has so far been slow, meaning 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

Wandsworth's Environment and Sustainability Strategy highlights the necessity of domestic retrofit to reduce the borough's emissions [ref]. Wandsworth's housing strategy also includes the retrofit of social housing and encourages retrofit of private housing. Wandsworth Council will lead by example through the decarbonisation strategy which includes the retrofit of all council buildings, making the council carbon neutral by 2030. This strategy therefore will align with the current strategies and policies in place, specifically addressing the need to reduce the 45.5% [ref] of emissions which come from domestic housing, to 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 Wandsworth

will contribute to achieving the regional and national retrofit targets.

Retrofit of social housing with poor energy performance is a key Social Objective of the Wandsworth Local Plan 2023-2038. The Local Plan also recognises the potential for borough-wide retrofit to mitigate climate change locally through reducing domestic carbon dioxide emissions. It also recognises retrofit 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.

The Wandsworth Council Air Quality Action plan aims to lead by example in rolling out a programme of energy efficiency across council homes via retrofit such as replacing heating systems e.g. gas boilers with low emission alternatives. It also extends the scope of retrofit beyond social housing, aiming to tackle both air quality and the cost-of-living crisis by providing advice and support for energy efficiency improvements for all borough residents [ref].

Wandsworth Council's skills strategy sets a 2024/2025 target for green and sustainability curriculum packages, aiming to reach 260 enrolments, in its first year committing to specific targets for green and sustainability curriculum packages. To deliver retrofit Wandsworth Council needs to put more focus on the intersection between the Built Environment and Green Skills, which is why this forms a focus of this strategy.

Strategy aims

A Vision for Retrofit in Wandsworth

Our vision is to transform Wandsworth into a beacon of sustainability and resilience by implementing a borough-wide retrofit strategy that improves energy efficiency and reduces energy costs, reduces carbon emissions, and improves the comfort and health of our residents. We aim to achieve this through a collaborative, data-driven approach that engages and empowers our residents and communities, supporting 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 Wandsworth to achieve its goal of being a net zero borough by 2043.

Together, we will build a low carbon and resilient Wandsworth, where every resident benefits from the positive impacts of retrofit and net zero.

The aim of the Wandsworth Retrofit Strategy

The retrofit strategy exists to bring together our understanding of the work needed to fill the gap on retrofit to meet our 2043 net zero targets. The focus of this document is to lay out where responsibilities sit for this work and understand the direct role and influencing capability of Wandsworth Council in supporting, promoting and facilitating retrofit across the whole borough. 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 Wandsworth 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 Wandsworth 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.
- **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 Wandsworth Environment and Sustainability Strategy, the Decarbonisation Strategy, the Housing and Homelessness 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 per cent 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 effect 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 8.4% of homes in Wandsworth 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.

Environmental Benefits

In Wandsworth, domestic property makes up 42% of the total emissions produced. 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 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 and communal social housing areas sits exclusively within Wandsworth Council's remit. Influencing and effecting retrofit within privately owned and rented homes falls within Wandsworth Council's area of influence.

Figure 7 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 council's 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 and social housing residents, reinforcing the messaging of Wandsworth Council. To achieve this, high levels of coordination is needed across various stakeholders to ensure consistent messaging and support, through local authority leadership, to facilitate home retrofit. Overcoming the barriers to home retrofit requires a holistic approach from stakeholders due to the overlapping nature of the barriers, recognising the whole-systems approach. This borough-wide strategy sets the vision and actions needed, creating the enabling environment for responsible partners to address the challenges to make the progress required [ref].

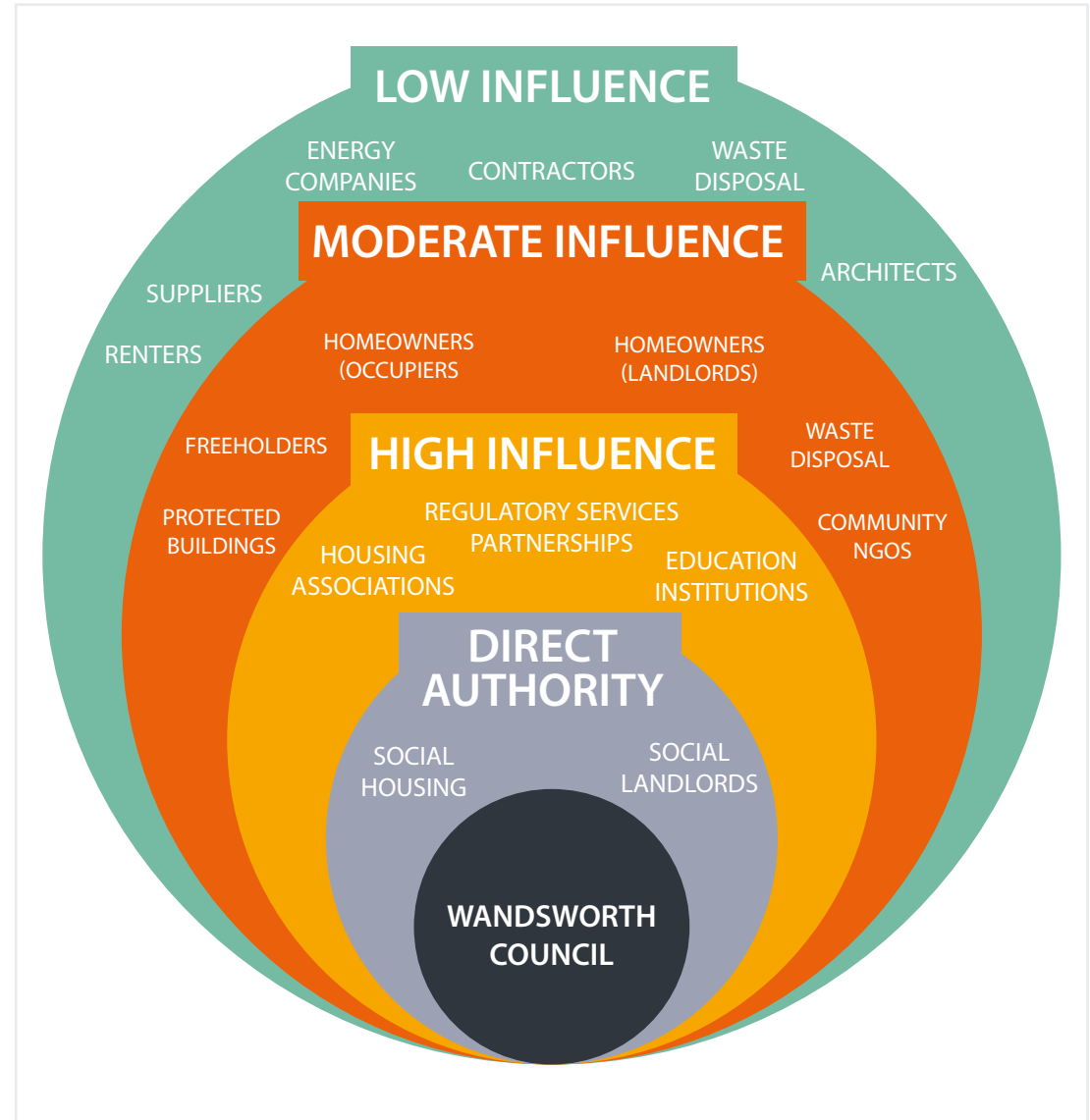


Figure 7: Spheres of influence stakeholder map. Map showing the level of influence that Wandsworth Council has over the relevant stakeholders.

2.1 Local Authority

Wandsworth Council is committed to retrofitting and understands the importance of progressing this to meet our climate targets. Improving homes through 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 add value for residents through effecting change in their local environment and empowering decision making for residents through awareness raising, improving trust and the council's relationship with its residents.

Wandsworth Council has high levels of interest in retrofit; however, the level of influence is limited. The council has direct control over social housing. However, influence over all other stakeholders shown in Figure 7 is limited. Whilst the council has no authority over other stakeholders, there are resources that can encourage wider retrofit, offering incentives for retrofit action to residents and contractors as well as sharing 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 addressing the retrofit challenge. The council is 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 retrofit at scale.

2.2 Social Housing provider

Social housing has a mixed finance model, supported by the government and the rent paid from tenants. Consequently, social housing is subject to a degree of government control through its regulatory frameworks that ensure housing is of sufficient quality, predominantly the Decent Homes Standard. However, as demand for affordable housing has increased, social housing providers have become more reliant on private investment and mixed tenure housing and are therefore also subject to the conditions of private investment and varied ownership which is likely to prioritise return on investment over energy efficiency of housing [ref] and limit ability to effect change. Funding is typically the limiting factor for home improvements which go beyond meeting the relevant regulatory requirements and stipulations within leasehold agreements.

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, holding private landlords 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 typically profit and therefore putting investment into a property that they will not see a return on is counter to their objectives. 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 to be able to rent in London. 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.

2.5 Renters

Residents renting within Wandsworth 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 CREW Energy assist residents within Wandsworth by directly providing energy and retrofit advice and 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, such as putting insulation in an extension, or installing heat pump instead of a gas boiler upgrade. It is therefore vital that the council connects with contractors and colleagues within planning to encourage retrofit within the 'able-to-pay' market. Furthermore, the council needs to 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.

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 and impact the supply chain, 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 Wandsworth, 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.

- **Social Housing**
- **Private Sector Housing**
- **Place-based approaches**
- **Funding**
- **Green Skills**

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 should not come at the cost of compromising on other elements of our climate action plan. One important aspect that needs to be considered throughout the retrofit process is biodiversity, which is essential for the long-term sustainability and ecological health of Wandsworth. 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, Wandsworth 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 and local supply chains where possible, we can 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 Wandsworth. We will explore the feasibility of partnerships to enable reuse of building materials and work alongside Planning to dissuade demolition where possible.

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 Wandsworth Adaptation and Resilience Strategy which will support Wandsworth 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 Wandsworth 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 carbon neutral target and 2043 net zero targets respectively.



Social Housing

Where we are and the challenges

Wandsworth Council maintains approximately 17,400 tenanted social housing properties across its portfolio, with a total of 33,000 properties including leaseholder properties. These properties are currently maintained as part of a reactive maintenance schedule, with repairs restricted through the existing leasehold agreements and restrictions on funding through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). These limit home improvements through a focus on like-for-like or end of life replacements.

To meet our climate targets, the Council has to reduce emissions from both social and private sector housing across the Borough by 84%. Funding this level of work presents a huge challenge, taking into consideration the current funding approach for social housing. In order to meet this target, there is a need for significant investment, and a shift in how the Council invests into its major works programme, as well as seeking and securing opportunities for external funding. Part of the complexity for social housing retrofit is the mixed tenure blocks, requiring agreement from all tenants for some retrofit measures which affect the building's fabric. Wandsworth has a high percentage of mixed tenure blocks, representing just less than half of the total housing stock [ref], presenting a significant challenge and risk of delay or halting retrofitting works due to the Council not having full control of the block. In order for works to go ahead in mixed tenure blocks, all residents within the property will be balloted to agree to the works and agree that an acceptable amount is being charged. As the HRA cannot cover leaseholder property costs, the ballot is mandatory



energy management officer positions and providing training to existing colleagues to become qualified retrofit coordinators.

Areas of focus and action

Strategic long-term approach

We will develop a strategic, long-term approach to retrofit through a social housing retrofit strategy and review our capital works programme to include retrofit and regulatory compliance work. This will consider an approach to conduct retrofit works in unoccupied properties during rotation so disruption to residents is minimal. This shift from reactive works will afford flexibility in decisions around upgrading homes. In laying out what we intend to achieve when, we will have time to consider alternative funding mechanisms and align our programme of work with grant eligibility. This approach will also ensure our properties are future proofed and measures designed with climate adaptation at the forefront. We will monitor the outcome of installed retrofit measures as part of our long-term approach, recognising these measures take time to demonstrate their benefits, and ensuring we are aware of the most beneficial and suitable technologies for our housing stock. This approach will also mean we can remotely monitor properties for their energy efficiency, better understanding our residents' needs and challenges and using this data to inform our approach. In recognition of the challenges presented by mixed tenure blocks and leaseholder ballots, we will lobby government to address this and

seek for changes on what we are required to do with leaseholders to enable works.

Financial Planning and Funding

Teams in Housing will work alongside the Climate Change and Sustainability Team and external funding colleagues to identify and work to secure external funding to continue to deliver our retrofitting plans. We will innovate to establish new means of financing the works needed given their high costs, engaging tenants to ensure any changes and costs are communicated and understood, while explaining the long-term benefits and savings associated. We will continue to monitor and apply for Government funding to enable these works and will work with relevant teams to develop place-based approaches to retrofit.

Resident Engagement and Education

We will proactively communicate and engage with residents to raise awareness and understanding of retrofit benefits, sharing the social housing retrofit strategy with them to demonstrate transparency and build trust around planned works, and the associated challenges. We will work alongside other Council services to engage and inform mixed tenure blocks, working to develop innovative solutions and funding models to enable works to take place in these blocks. We will work to ensure our strategy on community engagement for Housing includes retrofit information and considerations.

Skills development

We will identify skills and capacity gaps within our delivery, recognising opportunities to retrain our existing workforce and develop expertise in lost skills, in particular relating to heritage retrofit. We will continue to work with South Thames College to explore opportunities for apprenticeships to address skill gaps, while working to the South London Partnership retrofit roadmap recommendations around skills needed. A partnership will be explored with Roehampton University's Sustainable Engineering and Technology Education Centre to provide green skills education and specific courses for our existing workforce.



Private sector

Where we are and the challenges

The council's influence in the private sector 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.

Wandsworth experiences one of the highest churn rates of residents in London, meaning there is a strong market for landlords and limited opportunity to engage residents on temporary home improvement measures. With the sector spanning private landlords, owner occupiers and renters, we have to employ a variety of methods to progress retrofit, with each category facing distinct challenges.

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

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. With residents preferring to work off local recommendations for installers and measures, 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.

With very low-level requirements for privately rented properties, currently EPC E or above, most homes in Wandsworth 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 private sector 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 4,000 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 129 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

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.

Support 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 Wandsworth 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.

Enforcement – landlord licensing

Engaging landlords is crucial to effect change within private sector retrofitting. Ensuring all landlords are made aware of likely legislation changes to Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) and the EPC requirements for rented homes will serve as early notice 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 can use its enforcement power to ensure that all rented housing meets the minimum energy efficiency standards (and living standards). In addition, we will build on the introduction of the Wandsworth mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation licensing scheme by widening the range of properties eligible for licensing, widening the geographic area covered and introduce selective licensing in areas where there has been identified as the greatest need. Objectives for selective licensing include increased tenant awareness of rights and minimum standards and the improvement of housing conditions, property management and compliance, including the improvement of EPC standards which will spur an increase in retrofit for private sector rented properties, with discounts in licensing fees for properties that have higher EPC ratings. In addition, a selective licensing scheme will be introduced within the designated areas of Furzedown, Tooting Bec, Tooting Broadway and South Balham under the Housing Act 2004 or the HMO regulations 2018, in part ensuring the EPC is presented to tenants and is in line with the current MEES regulations. Through introducing and widening these schemes, it is hoped that engagement between the Council and private sector landlords will improve, helping to facilitate the sharing of information and awareness on retrofit with private sector landlords.

Planning

To address the perceived barrier of planning permission, Wandsworth 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.

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. 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. For Wandsworth residents living in a listed building or conservation area, obtaining planning permission may be a genuine barrier to retrofitting their homes. Wandsworth Council already provides free policy advice through email to help overcome this barrier however, it could explore offering free pre-planning application services for planning proposals which are related to sustainability (including retrofit). Offering free planning advice would help to alleviate the confusion around the planning system and eliminate some of the costs associated with domestic retrofit. These measures should be considered alongside setting domestic retrofit targets within Wandsworth climate policy to ensure buy-in and commitment to progress.



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 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 Wandsworth 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 Wandsworth 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

Our work on the Alton Renewal Plan, supporting the Alton estate, is an example of the value of place-based solutions. This example showcases how Wandsworth Council can invest in an area, working together with local partners to enable a place to thrive. This approach 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 Wandsworth 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 Wandsworth 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 Wandsworth's built environment and socio-economic profile.

Building partnerships and awareness

Achieving Net-Zero borough by 2043 will not be possible working only at an individual level, it needs to 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 undertaken by the Alton Renewal team 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 Wandsworth 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 relying 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 require 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 Wandsworth. While this is small in terms of the total needed, it has brought about real improvements for residents. The Green Homes Grant Local 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 over £200,000 be invested to our Warm Home Packs project, continuing for the second year, distributing to more than 4,000 households to reduce energy bills through improved energy efficiency. We are a part of the consortium bid for the Warm Homes local grant, to secure funding for eligible homes in Wandsworth and have secured Social Housing Decarbonisation

funding to improve individual tenanted properties, either when vacant, between lettings or when occupied, enabling works to approximately 230 properties.

Areas of focus and action

Council funding

Capital funding available via the Wandsworth Environment and Sustainability 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. We will also ensure we use our planned capital programme budget to maximise retrofit and energy efficiency in council housing.

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 Wandsworth. 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 alongside Planning 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 13) 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. Wandsworth Council needs to show that there will be long-

term demand for retrofit skills through consistent promotion and funding. Showcasing a long-term demand for retrofit skills would also encourage schools and colleges to invest in education and training in these areas. The council will explore funding to demonstrate the long-term demand for these skills in order 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, Wandsworth joined a new collaboration with the South London Partnership (boroughs of Croydon, Sutton, Merton, Kingston & Richmond) and was successful in obtaining DESNZ funding to accelerate retrofit skills in the sub region. This enabled Wandsworth 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 twenty 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 Wandsworth and the immediate surrounds. 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 Education 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) and a series of new training pilots, exploring new delivery methods (such as micro-credentials) to boost uptake. 1,644 existing SME supply chain businesses were identified in Wandsworth 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. Wandsworth 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. We have partnered with Wandsworth Workmatch to raise the profile of retrofit and green skills careers, attending job fairs to spotlight on environmental work and opportunities, reaching 650 residents and 50 businesses within 2024.

Areas of focus and action

Partnership working

Wandsworth 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, Wandsworth 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 Net Zero Officers group, 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, 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 Wandsworth's local employment strategy, looking to feature green skills work, particularly within construction and retrofit, through Wandsworth Workmatch at job fairs and events. This area is recognised as a key area for growth within the employment strategy, highlighting the opportunity to capitalise on this demand and build a workforce to meet it.

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.





WANDSWORTH

RETROFIT STRATEGY 2025 - 2030

