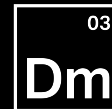


Community Powered Retrofit for London

Stage 1: Establishing the case

Final June 2023



Contents

- 01 The system challenge of retrofit
- 02 What is Community Powered Retrofit?
- 03 Pathways to community-powered retrofit
- 04 Annex

- 01 The system challenge of retrofit
- 02 What is Community Powered Retrofit?
- 03 Pathways to community-powered retrofit
- 04 Annex

**Retrofitting London's homes will
mean facing four big challenges.**



Housing upgrade challenge

In London alone more than 3 million homes need to be retrofitted between now and 2030, with the capital having the highest proportion of pre-1930 dwellings of any UK region. **40% of Londoners say they either have mould in their homes or struggle to heat them properly**; one of the biggest determinants of respiratory illness and heart conditions. Beyond physical health, 1 in 4 adults say that rising energy costs is affecting their mental health.

Source: Centre for London⁷

Cost of living challenge

Compounding poor housing performance has been an exponential rise in energy prices, rising mortgage rates and a bump in inflation – all of which have created huge constraints on people's income.

Around 93% of people reported their cost of living had increased compared with a year ago. Even with increased public awareness of both energy efficiency and scrutiny over who supplies our energy, many aren't able to engage with the level of retrofitting needed without greater funding and support. Current funding is increasingly limited, short-term, difficult to access and highly conditional.

Source: ONS⁷

Climate challenge

Reducing the energy our homes need has long been a cornerstone of reaching our climate targets. Yet what's now clear is neighbourhood climate strategies will also need to reduce overheating and improve social resilience, as well as minimising the carbon consumption of retrofit measures. **Whilst an overwhelming majority of Londoners are concerned about climate change*, many of London's households are underserved by existing retrofit programmes and funding.**

Source: *London Councils⁷ English Housing Survey 2021-22⁷

Extrapolation from GMCA research in 2022 referenced in PPR business plan

Crisis of trust challenge

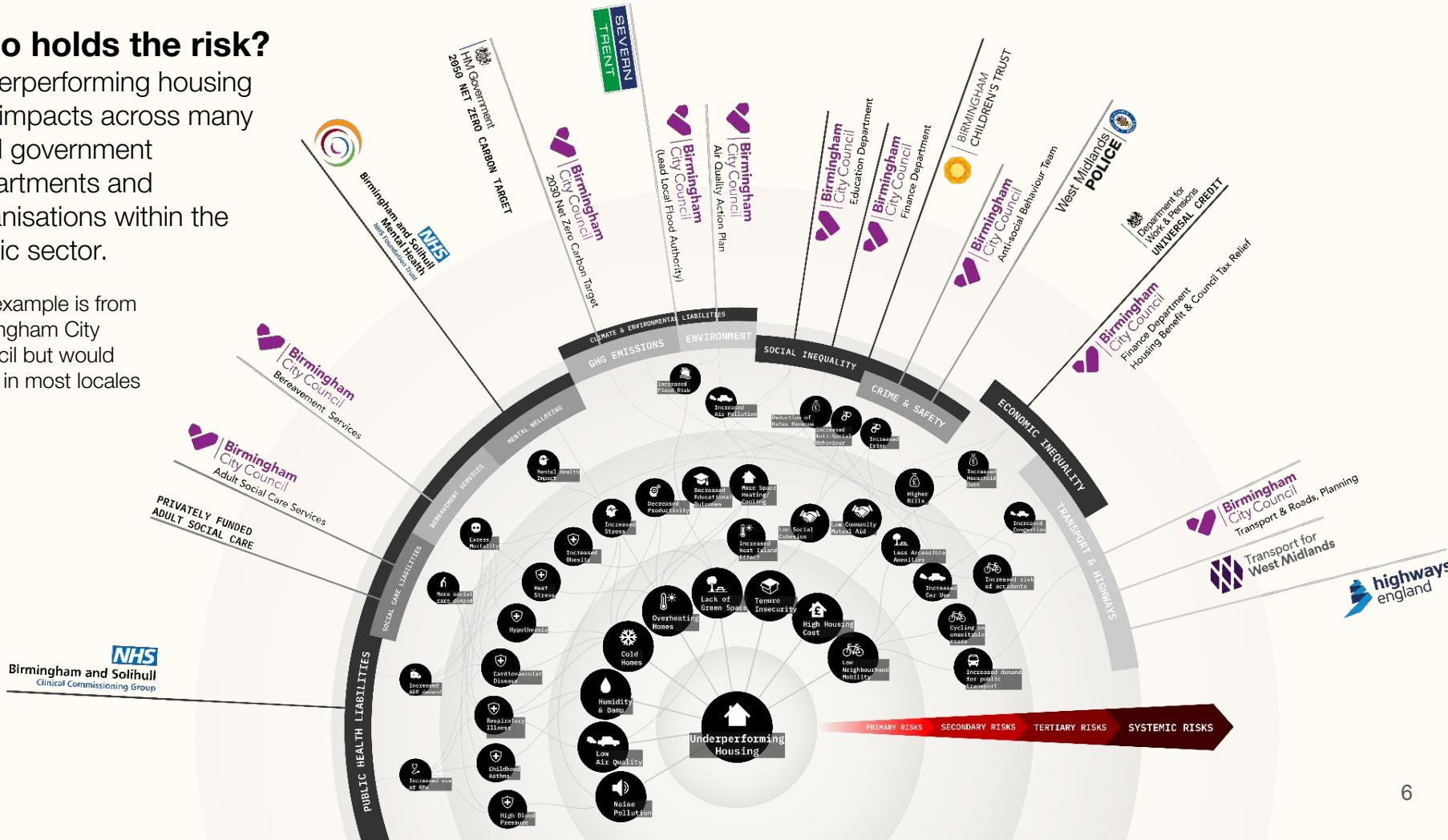
At the centre of the retrofit challenge is a deep sense of distrust and skepticism in both government schemes and the a lack of confidence in those responsible for the technical delivery of retrofit. This has been exacerbated by the failure and ineffectiveness of previous high profile schemes such as the [Green Home Grants](#) and the [Green Deal](#), for both homeowners as well as contractors and tradespeople.

Source: Multiple including research by [NESTA](#), and National Audit Office links above

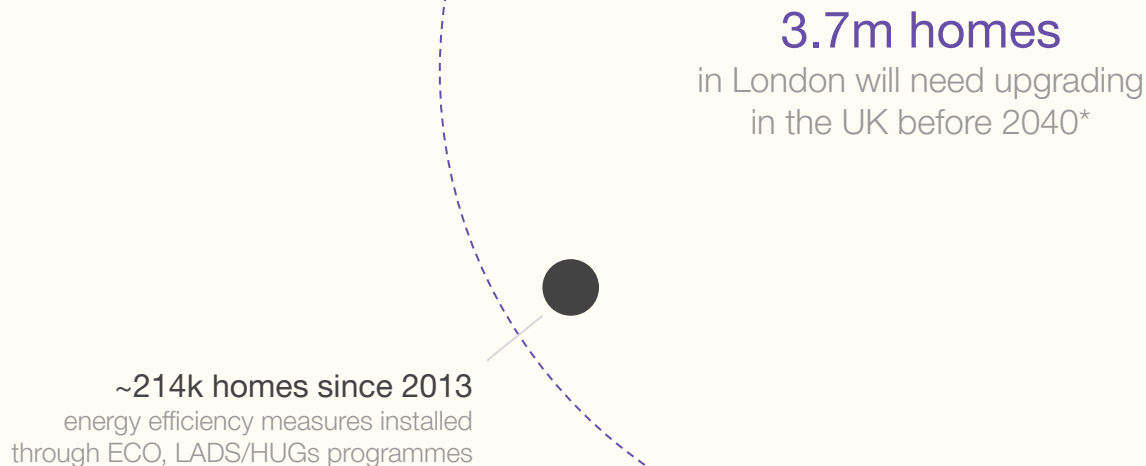
Who holds the risk?

Underperforming housing has impacts across many local government departments and organisations within the public sector.

This example is from Birmingham City Council but would apply in most locales

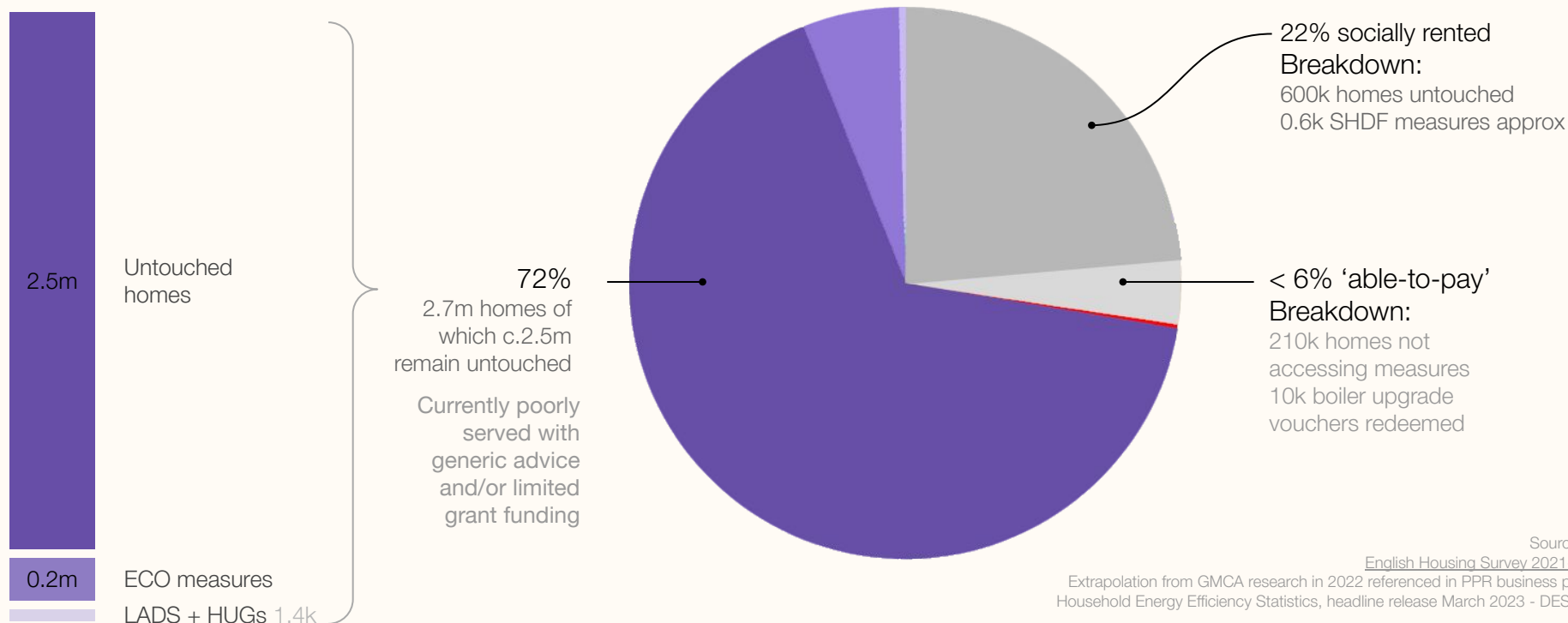


Existing retrofit programmes have underspent and under delivered



Existing retrofit programmes don't serve most of the households in London...

...and the pace of change is still too slow



Sources:
[English Housing Survey 2021-22](#)
Extrapolation from GMCA research in 2022 referenced in PPR business plan
Household Energy Efficiency Statistics, headline release March 2023 - DESNZ

What is missing from the current approaches to retrofit?

01

Early householder engagement and emphasis on the user journey throughout the entire process

02

An approach that sees the house, its inhabitants and the neighbourhood as an integrated system

03

Investment in long term skills development and prioritising local networks of contractors and delivery partners

04

Opportunities for attractive, equitable, low-cost finance and developing collective buying power

05

A long-term policy landscape and a streamlined approach to accessing funding

06

Accounting for whole-life carbon (and costs) (?) and wider impact of materials use and supply chains

07

Wider definitions of value creation and focus on designing for and capturing the multiple co-benefits of retrofit as a catalyst for neighbourhood transition

- 01 The system challenge of retrofit
- 02 What is Community Powered Retrofit?
- 03 Pathways to community-powered retrofit
- 04 Annex



Community Powered Retrofit will mobilise local residents and communities as part of designing neighbourhood retrofit programmes.

Why Community Powered Retrofit?

01 Deep engagement

Utilising and strengthening existing community networks to increase engagement in transition activities, adapting them to local circumstances while building social capital and changing behaviours

e.g. Retrofit Balsall Heath and MECC

02 Local supply chains

Developing local job opportunities, training and skills, engaging local contractors and building local accountability for quality control

e.g. Carbon Coop

03 Aggregation

Achieving replicability and economies of scale through co-location, bulk purchase and/or typological approaches

e.g. Becontree Retrofit Pattern Book and MMC, Carbon Coop (Joint works funding and contract)

04 A just transition

Focus is on achieving wider mission that includes alleviating fuel poverty, community cohesion and supporting vulnerable households

e.g. Community Energy projects

05 Unlocking latent resources

Significant skills, local work, volunteering and providing finance e.g. crowdfunding & share offers, socialisation of the financial offer

e.g. Community Energy projects. POWER

06 Overcoming dependence on policy

Navigating and understanding inconsistent and changing policies, campaigning and extending influence of individual households

e.g. POWER

Shifting the approach

Individual customers → Collective approach

Extractive finance and grants → Local economic value

Standardised process → User centered journey

Focus on 'measures' delivered → Focus on outcomes e.g. health

Principles of community-powered retrofit



Participatory & capacity-building processes

Local citizens are involved at each step of the retrofit journey; from early stage research and scoping, through to organisational set up, design and implementation. They have meaningful power over key decisions made. There is ongoing development of local skills, training and understanding.



Local economic resilience

The funding and financial flows (eg. procurement, capital investments) for both the organisations and works are designed and built around models that enable wealth created by residents, workers and local communities to be held by them, rather than flowing out as profits to shareholders (e.g. local procurement)



Civic ownership & ongoing stewardship

Civic governance and ownership of both assets and implementation organisations are designed into the procurement and implementation processes. Consideration is made for ongoing revenue streams to support a successful 'retrofit journey' for each community.

Community Powered Retrofit

We think there are a five key building blocks that can encourage community powered retrofit.

Implementing one or all of these will need flexibility so as to integrate into the unique context of each community and neighbourhood and its housing characteristics, history, ownership and local wishes.



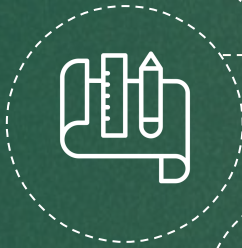
1 Movement building

Create the infrastructure for collective action
Build trust and motivation for positive change



2 Training & upskilling

Develop local capacity and skills
Offer professional training opportunities



3 Whole life design & journey planning

Understand the built environment and its inhabitants as a system
Integrate the work of different trades



4 Making finance work for places

Implement community wealth building procurement principles
Provide access to ethical investment sources with low or no returns
Identify long term, affordable financing options



5 Local ownership

Support community owned assets
Set up/engage with an appropriate retrofit entity

01 Movement building



What it is

Sets out the vision for, and communicates the foundation for neighbourhood transformation and a shared mission for better homes and futures

What it does

Builds knowledge and trust
Develops neighbourhood-level infrastructure for communication, engagement and action
Encourages collective action

What it needs

Resource for neighbourhood-level coordination
Community-based social marketing strategy
Engaged and interested community leaders
Access to physical or virtual space to gather



Oldham Energy Futures: <https://oldhamenergyfutures.carbon.coop/>



Civic Square <https://www.instagram.com/p/CjsZZvajEC9/>



Oldham Energy Futures: <https://oldhamenergyfutures.carbon.coop/>

Training & upskilling



What it is

A programme for professional development of community members and upskilling of existing tradespeople to collectively deliver neighbourhood retrofit

What it does

Creates local economic opportunities
Builds trust and motivation
Overcomes supply chain limitations

What it needs

Adaptation of existing skills development programmes to a neighbourhood level
Engaged and interested community members and tradespeople
Certification, standards and quality assurance and investment



People Powered Retrofit



New Economics Foundation



Architects Climate Action Network



We Can Make

Whole life design & journey planning



What it is

Working with the inhabitants, their home and their neighbourhood as a whole system and designing toward holistic long-term goals rather than quick fixes

What it does

Takes a user-centred approach that builds literacy, trust and confidence

Reduces overall climate impacts while improving quality of life

What it needs

Deep ongoing engagement between residents and local authorities

Skilled designers, building surveyors and planners

High-quality data and integrated planning across homes, neighbourhoods and the city



Civic Square <https://www.instagram.com/p/CpzibQjDxfI/>



<https://www.becontreeforever.uk/projects/becontree-design-code>

Making finance work for places



What it is

A commitment to invest in local economic development and non-extractive finance mechanisms that enable long-term transformative investment

What it does

Embeds community-wealth building principles in decision-making

Enables entire neighbourhoods to invest in their own transformation

What it needs

New definitions of value and innovative value capture mechanisms
Finance focussed on system-level outcomes
Patient finance



Power <https://www.power.film/greenbacks>



Image source: <https://mailchimp.com/courier/article/community-investment/>

05

Local ownership



What it is

Rebuilding place-based economies

Putting power in the hands of people to shape their own futures



What it does

Retains wealth in local areas

Brings decision-making power closer to the places impacted by decisions

Gives people agency

What it needs

Social and technical infrastructure to enable just decision-making and power distribution in local ownership

Community-level institutions and organisations e.g. community energy companies

New models of community ownership

Policies, templates and contracts that structure and give authority to community planning e.g. local plans, local energy action plans



Homebaked CLT:
<https://www.thisisanfield.com/2023/03/liverpool-fans-favourite-bakery-to-expand-after-receiving-new-funding/>

Impacts of CPR

01 Increased participation

Increased resident participation and awareness throughout the process from initial interest through to delivery.

02 Kick-start neighbourhood transition

A way to kick-start neighbourhood wide transition by providing a focal point and demonstration of collective action.

03 Builds local skills

Stimulating local demand allows for longer term skills training and organisational development for existing local contractors and retrofit organisations, helping to boost the local economy.

04 More effective financing

Greater low-cost finance and bulk buying options, combined with tailored support, can help to aggregate local demand.

05 Greater continuity

Local connections help to overcome and navigate an inconsistent and complicated policy and funding landscape

06 Reduced embodied carbon

Increased literacy of both the home as a system and the climate impacts of construction lead to better material choices

07 Maximising co-benefits

Retrofit is integrated with other net zero pathways, creating new financing opportunities and maximising the benefits created

- 01 The system challenge of retrofit
- 02 What is Community Powered Retrofit?
- 03 Pathways to community-powered retrofit
- 04 Annex

Learning from others (1): Neighbourhood approaches to decarbonisation

Foster agency for change

Community-level projects can provide a way for individuals to feel involved, to have agency and self-efficacy, and to ultimately make, support and experience change in their localities.

Understand and articulate the roles of different actors

Elements that work well at the local level and/or in being community-driven include the design phase, individuals' engagement with the climate challenge, ensuring a just transition, monitoring success on the ground, and realising wider and social benefits. Policy change, large-scale funding, and nationwide supply chain and skills development will need support from government but should be adapted and responsive to place-based approaches.

Start small and build a foundation

Starting small and focusing on success can enable more aspirational and complex interventions to then be taken forward with and by communities. Local networks and inclusive, successful engagement provide foundations for increasing the effectiveness of future interventions.

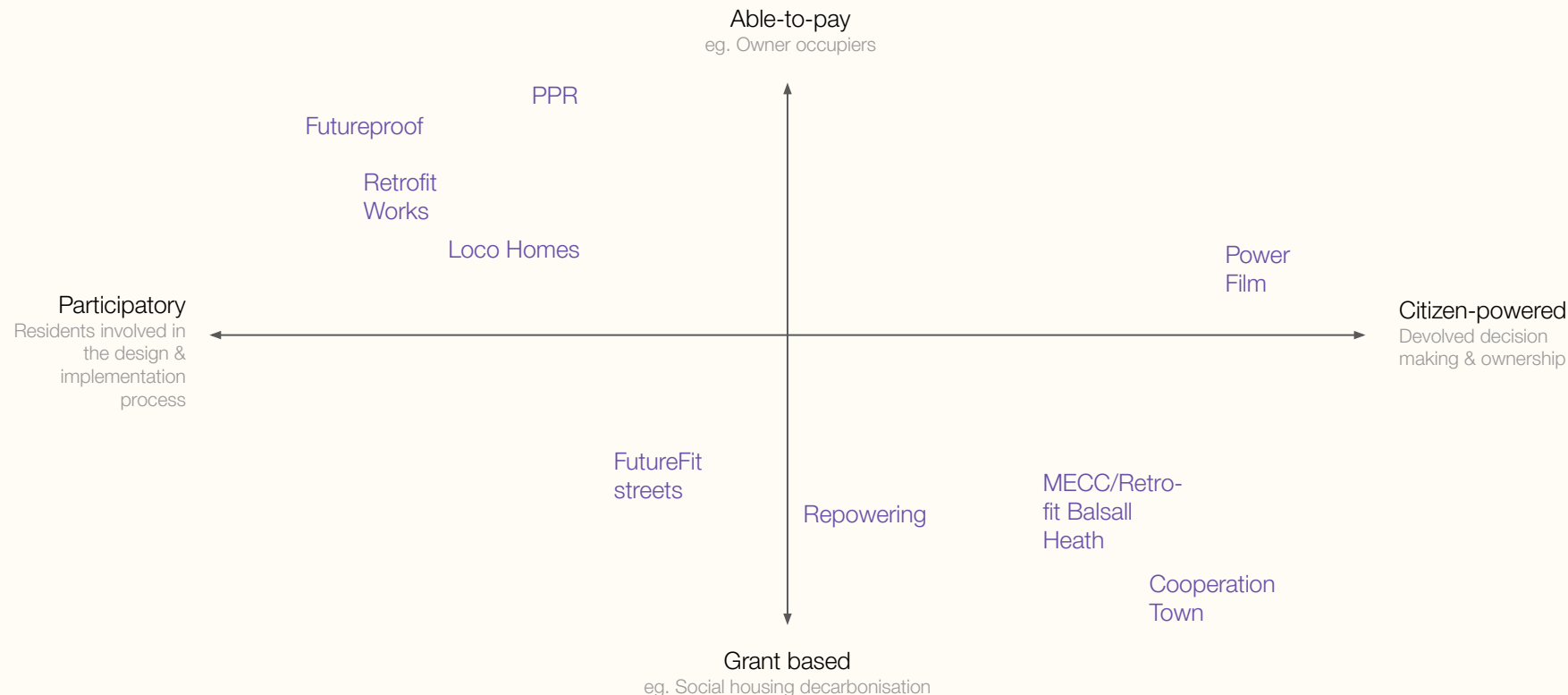
Appreciate and account for context

A one size fits all approach does not work for much of decarbonisation. Different communities face different challenges and will respond differently to local authority driven action. Intersecting challenges for communities need to be well understood for designing successful engagement approaches, strategies and interventions.

Learnings from others (2): Our own case study research ...

Future Fit Streets	Retrofit Balsall Heath	POWER	Homebaked CLT
<i>"Norming" retrofit on a single street</i>	<i>"No-one is left behind"</i>	<i>"Every home a power station"</i>	<i>"What do we mean by living well?"</i>
Pilot project run by a community energy organisation (SELCE) for a competition to "win" retrofit advice for your street: - Engagement through existing channels of those already interested in reducing carbon (solar, retrofit) - Retrofit parties held in peoples' homes attracted far more than those held in a community hall - Low cost finance would have more than doubled amount of interest from residents	An unconstituted community organisation in Birmingham focussing on home retrofit, Retrofit Balsall Heath: - Aggregating uptake means the residents have more power over the measures undertaken - The role of trusted intermediaries is fundamental - It is not always necessary to establish a new entity to deliver advice and support retrofit literacy	A CIC focused initially on delivering solar PV on every roof in a street, POWER: - Start quickly by talking to neighbours - Local communities have the potential to be agile and responsive - Local authority procurement rules can be a blocker to delivery - Local authorities could act as financier offering low cost finance	A 12 year old Community Land Trust in Liverpool, Homebaked CLT: - Identified that people need a place to be together - such places becoming frequently less available 3-pronged programme: - Connecting the high street and enterprise spaces - Developing and holding local networks - Developing a long term vision manifesto for the neighbourhood, which includes retrofitting a terrace of homes

Understanding community powered retrofit as a spectrum



Three possible scenarios for prototyping CPR

Top Down Situations

Enhance existing government funded programmes

Focus areas:

- Ongoing building of trust and capacity in community partners
- Develop a spatial focus aligned to community partners
- Include community partners in the bidding process from the outset
- Understand where CPR principles could integrate with grant programmes and in-house borough retrofit programmes
- Partner with trusted intermediaries to expand the reach of existing programmes increasing uptake
- Encourage collaboration and co-design to ensure longevity of scheme measures and interventions available

Grassroots Neighbourhoods

Initiate or strengthen a street or neighbourhood-scale project

Focus areas:

- Identify through different channels current community activity in retrofit or parallel domains (greening etc.)
- Work with local organisations and areas with known strong social networks to design, trial or build up existing street-scale schemes
- Commit additional resource to support existing communities to develop resilience for sustained action and build capacity
- Partner with broad range of cross borough departments and agencies to develop skills, organisational and technical

Latent Neighbourhoods

Understand where needs or opportunities arise in places without funding or active groups

Focus areas:

- Map and understand issues of concern in a manner that resonates with local residents
- Identify opportunities to create a range of forums for local communities to convene and build trust
- Be open to alternative entry points for retrofit discussions
- Support community groups to become more visible and draw out latent capacity
- Identify opportunities for mentoring with related mature communities organisations

Next steps: Phase 1 $\rightarrow$ Phase 2 Transition

Next steps

Phase 2 - transition

Stakeholder workshop - close contacts

The purpose of this workshop is to review the proposal for CPR with key close contacts, some who have contributed to the research and others who are known to be working in this space or keen to progress this work, to test whether they can see the benefit of this approach, help us identify any gaps or omissions and support the next steps

*Depending on the detailed scope, we expect a budget of c. £70k
To be completed by end 2023*

Phase 2

Stakeholder outreach

Open call to our broader networks would be made to attend a webinar where we present and take feedback, again to ensure opportunities for collaboration are identified, to reduce duplication, and to gather additional insight. Complemented by 121 discussions and other routes

RLHAP

Actions 1,6,8,10, 15,16,17 and 19

Pathways design

Development of three pathway designs as a method of testing and engaging with prototyping partners and community of learning

RLHIP

Priority K:
“Communications & case making”

Identification of demonstration neighbourhoods

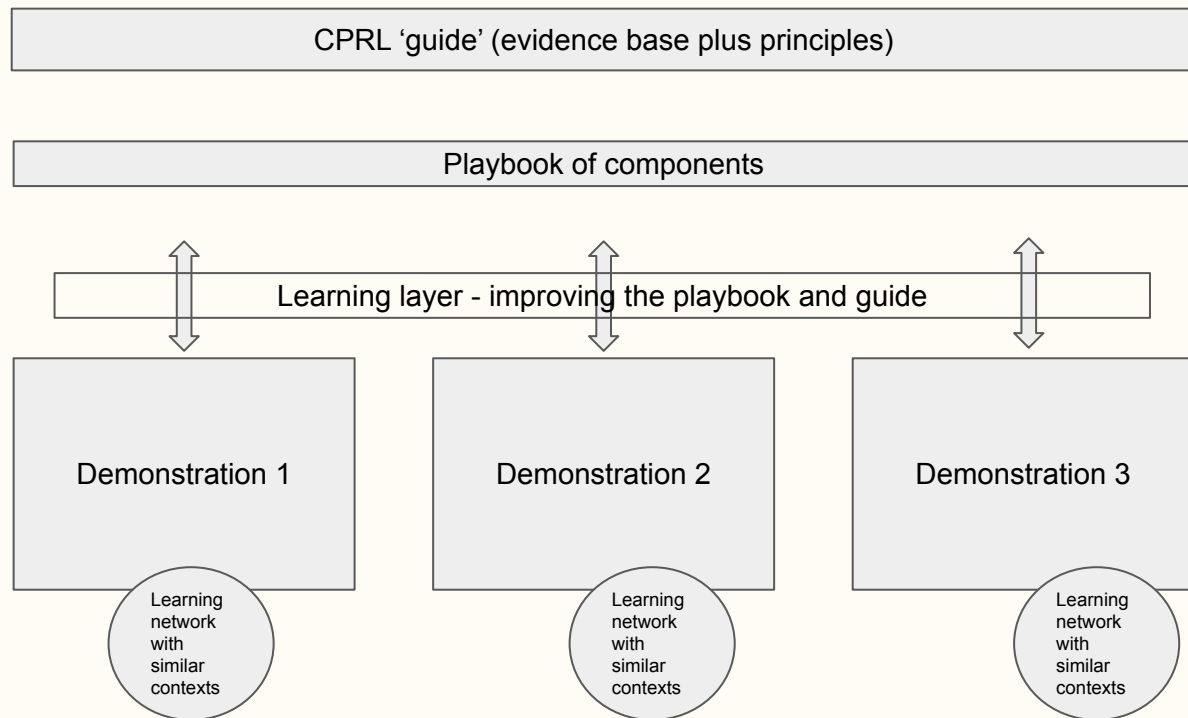
Identification and developing the design further with partners for 5 to 6 neighbourhoods across London that could be demonstration communities for the next phase of the programme.

Priority L:
“Community & resident engagement”

Phase 3 Demonstration budget, team and scope

Scoping and budgeting for implementation phase of demonstration projects

Phase 2 Design and 3 Demonstration indicative approach



- 01 The system challenge of retrofit
- 02 Learning from current responses
- 03 What is Community Powered Retrofit?
- 04 Pathways to community-powered retrofit
- 05 Annex

Annex 01

Academic and theoretical background for
community retrofit approaches

Six key benefits of community-led approaches

01 Deep engagement

Utilising and strengthening existing community networks to increase engagement in transition activities, adapting them to local circumstances while building social capital and changing behaviours

e.g. Retrofit Balsall Heath

02 Local supply chains

Developing local job opportunities, training and skills, engaging local contractors and building local accountability for quality control

e.g. Carbon Coop

03 Aggregation

Achieving replicability and economies of scale through co-location, bulk purchase and/or typological approaches

e.g. Becontree Retrofit Pattern Book and MMC, Carbon Coop (Joint works funding and contract)

04 A just transition

Focus is on achieving wider mission that includes alleviating fuel poverty, community cohesion and supporting vulnerable households

e.g. Community Energy projects

05 Unlocking latent resources

Significant skills, local work, volunteering and providing finance e.g. crowdfunding & share offers, socialisation of the financial offer

e.g. Community Energy projects. POWER?

06 Overcoming dependence on policy

Navigating and understanding inconsistent and changing policies, campaigning and extending influence of individual households

e.g. TBD

Defining deeper levels of participation...

Arnstein's ladder of participation



Credit: @JulietYoung

Annex 02

Analysis of current and previous
retrofit programmes

Community-powered retrofit vs. current approaches

	Grant-led programmes (e.g. Local Authority Delivery Schemes, Energy Company Obligation etc.)	Able to pay	Community-powered
Initiated by	Local authority or energy company	Individual household	Community groups collaborating with local authorities, energy companies and households
Beneficiaries	Households determined by government policies typically energy performance and household income	Households determined by ability to pay, motivation and knowledge	Households across a whole area as determined by communities themselves
Design	Focus on how to instal measures (such as insulation) as cheaply as possible determined centrally	Bespoke measures determined by household	Typological responses with bespoke variations allowing for some economies of scale. Varied 'depth' of retrofit determined locally.
Contractors	Limited number of larger contractors with standard works methodology	Small builder with bespoke method	Mixed likely to include partnering with local contractor(s), local skills development with a focus on user journey
User journeys	Determined by contractors. Multiple neighbourhood disruptions due to tenure-by-tenure programmes	Bespoke	Mutually agreed user journeys with focus on experience of users. Cross tenure focus allows for reduced disruption.
Legal terms	Standard terms between contractor and household determined by contractor or funder	Bespoke terms between contractor and household	Mutually beneficial terms agreed between parties
Financing	(Often) Fixed grant payments based on tenures	Savings, equity release or loans	Mixed including grant, outcomes-based financing and responsible lending with potential for ongoing support through community groups
Outcomes	Determined centrally based on measures installed (often not visible to public)	Depends on project but not open source	Open sharing of varied outcomes including energy, comfort, health, air quality etc.
Completing	Short timescale/stop-start programmes with limited monitoring and post installation support	Depends on project	Long-term journey with ongoing support and monitoring

What we know about current retrofit delivery models

Government retrofit programmes

Aims: To upgrade poorly performing homes with specific measures focused on those in fuel poverty or to drive adoption of new technologies

Examples: ECO, HUG, LADS, SHDF, Boiler Upgrade

Pros:

- Provides net additional grant

Cons:

- Often based on EPC which is not fit for purpose.
- Short-term, complex and prescriptive programmes do not allow for long-term planning and supply chain development, local typologies/needs, capacity building or the trust building required.
- Outcomes often represent very poor overall value for money.
- Impact of implementing 'whole' streets/ neighbourhoods are lost due to funding restrictions
- Limited resource for engagement exacerbates issues of mistrust in local authorities and other agencies
- Typically achieve poor response rate from residents leading to low rates of delivery and grant returned/reallocated

Community energy-led services

Aims: Carbon emissions reductions, redesigning an energy system fit for the future, give advice as a trusted intermediary

Examples: SELCE, BHESCo, Repowering London

Pros:

- Entities have good local links and understanding and are often trusted intermediaries
- Agile and able to adjust to the needs of the communities in which they operate

Cons:

- Often over reliant on volunteer resource so impact limited compared with scale of challenge
- Have access to minimal funding for supporting retrofit initiatives
- Literacy is low around the mechanics of retrofit
- Also face the same supply chain challenges as other models - market not developed to deliver quality works

Able-to-pay services

Aims: Build the owner occupier and able-to-pay market, carbon emissions reductions, give advice as a trusted intermediary

Examples: People Powered Retrofit, Retrofitworks, Eco-furb, Furbnow, Cosy Homes Oxfordshire

Pros:

- Developing an end-to-end service building trust for homeowners
- Deemed to have reliable knowledge regarding the technical side of retrofit

Cons:

- Supply chain is not developed, including PAS2035 recommended roles from consultants to installers
- Accessible mainly to households that are motivated by environmental outcomes, wealthier and organised
- Recommendations often communicated in ways not commonly understood by supply chain leading to lack of interest from contractors
- House by house is slow and contractors won't take the risk without a pipeline

Learning from previous initiatives - government retrofit schemes

Supply Chain Demonstrator

Aims: To test different approaches for increasing the rates of energy efficiency improvements amongst able-to-pay owner occupiers

Collaborators: PPR, Futureproof, Homeworks, Ecofurb, Cosy Homes, Warmer Sussex

Summary: After three years, six dedicated programmes delivered by experienced, agile and committed organisations have resulted in less than 200 retrofits, even from an ostensibly enthusiastic 'early adopter' customer group.

Learnings:

- High interest in retrofit as a service, but significant drop-off between initial interest, retrofit assessment and decision to commit
- Local trusted organisations, for example community groups and councils, were important in getting the word out and getting people to sign up
- Supply chain was a main barrier. Existing builders were not interested and upskilling was not part of the programme. Worked best where local retrofit coordinator entity had ongoing and deep relationships with local supply chains.
- Difficult to balance customer demand and supply chain appetite
- Need for innovative financing elements to enhance the offer

Green Homes Grant

Aims: Affordable warmth through funding for insulation and low carbon heating measures

Summary: £1.5 billion earmarked, £314m spent; 39,000 homes retrofitted out of the 600,000 target; the 1.5-year programme was cancelled after just six months, there were problems with homeowners redeeming vouchers and a shortage of local installers. The scheme was administration heavy, with each home costing £1000 to administer, the supply chain wasn't ready and the increase in quotes (3 per interested household) didn't materialise into new work.

Learnings:

- The Scheme as a concept was widely praised, but management and delivery were not successful
- The requirements of the Scheme led to high quality installations
- Installations and materials were the major roadblocks. It was very difficult to find installers to provide quotes; issuance of vouchers was too slow; and there was a lack of availability of raw materials
- Installers invested in upskilling to meet the requirements and failed to recoup their investment when the Scheme was cancelled

Learning from previous initiatives - government retrofit schemes

ECO2t or ECO3

Aims: Improve the ability of low-income, fuel-poor and vulnerable households to heat their homes while reducing carbon emissions.

Summary: £640 million invested to deliver 3.5 million measures in 2.5 million homes. Main measures were boiler replacement and insulation.

Learnings:

- Energy suppliers have reportedly said that the “low hanging fruit” of easier installations had already been completed, leaving more difficult and costly installations remaining
- 57% of households said they had benefitted a fair amount or a great deal from having the energy saving measures installed. 22% said they had not benefited very much, 9% said they had not benefited at all
- Main benefits were reduced bills, more comfortable homes, reduced worry about heating
- Households that received heating measures experienced more tangible benefits than those that received insulation measures
- The structure of the scheme’s delivery was confusing for participants, because of the range of organisations involved and the partnership between private companies and government
- Where marketing was targeted at a street or area, people were able to talk to their neighbours about the scheme. This provided a source of support and confidence about participation in the scheme.

High Rise Hope

Aims: Whole-building approach to renovation of high-rise tower blocks to improve energy efficiency, health and well-being and quality of life for residents

Summary: This large-scale estate retrofit programme shows the value of: a) modernising and upgrading; b) energy saving; c) keeping community on side and building a relationship of trust with residents; d) local neighbourhood management.

Learnings:

- Significant co-benefits of social housing upgrade (improved physical and mental health, improved educational attainment, emotional wellbeing and resilience, pride in place, reduced stigma, etc.)
- Resident buy-in and input is essential to achieve social impact and to measure the full impact (positive and negative)
- Residents need consistent and reiterated information about why the work is being done and their part in exploiting the opportunities that follow
- Behaviour change in terms of energy management in the home is essential to achieve the full benefits of the project
- Delivery was simplified by having a single freeholder

Learning from neighbourhood approaches

Neighbourhood approaches to decarbonisation (LGA / DG Cities summary report)

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/neighbourhood-approach-decarbonisation#introduction-and-approach>

Aims: to share the successes and challenges of place-based decarbonisation initiatives in different local authorities and surface the unique approaches, contexts and outcomes for each

Approach: broad literature review and 17 local case studies

Key insights:

- Knowledge building and sharing is a critical step in neighbourhood decarbonisation
- Community engagement is a fundamental driver for success.
- Design and delivery are benefitted by working at the neighbourhood level
- An inclusive transition is recognised by councils to be highly important
- Funding and costs are a critical challenge, inconsistent funding makes it difficult to replicate and scale projects
- Monitoring and evaluation reflect a range of methods and varying levels of success

Recommendations...

...for Councils and community groups

- Appreciate the contextual, as there is no one size fits all approach to neighbourhood decarbonisation.
- Encourage and support learning from best practices across the UK.
- Recognise where there is a need for cooperation across neighbourhood projects to enhance benefit realisation.

...for Government

- Take forward a place-based funding approach, which simplifies and consolidates funds and provides long-term certainty.
- Provide more finance to councils directly to develop their own capacity and encourage neighbourhood working where the benefits are well established.
- Support councils and their communities to develop supply chains for decarbonisation work.
- Support the development of community advisory hubs where there are current gaps.
- Incorporate wider and social benefits into decision-making for decarbonisation.

Annex 03

Community retrofit case studies

Case Studies

Future Fit Streets

"Norming" retrofit on a single street

A project tested and delivered by SELCE in London, [Future Fit Streets](#):

- Found greater success in engaging through existing community groups than starting anew
- Information sharing in a familiar setting attracted greater numbers, better turn out to retrofit parties in people's' homes than at a community hall
- **Found that focusing on individual homes was very time consuming and resource heavy**
- The stop start nature of government grants can derail projects whether utilising them or not

Longer case study here.

Retrofit Balsall Heath

"No-one is left behind"

An unconstituted community organisation in Birmingham, [Retrofit Balsall Heath](#):

- Focuses on building on existing community channels of communication to deliver literacy around retrofit
- Has taken on an existing funding stream (LADS 3) and generated significantly increased take up than achieved by the local authority through utilising deep engagement methods
- Increased literacy led to greater sign ups which in turn led to the community having agency in the design of the measures proposed, increasing likelihood of successful installation and operation

Longer case study here.

Case Studies

Power

“Every home a power station”

A Community Interest Company focused initially on solar energy, [POWER](#):

- Begun in the immediate neighbourhood by residents
- Acts hyper locally to instigate street by street grassroots action radiating out
- Has crowdfunded to raise the capital for installation of solar arrays on 30+ homes in the first phase
- Has begun to layer on retrofit literacy at a local level building interest
- New partnerships with other organisations and agencies emerging to develop replicable retrofit approach
- Believes local authorities can play a vital role in retrofit by delivering low cost finance

Longer case study here.

Homebaked CLT

“What do we mean by living well?”

A 12 year old Community Land Trust in Liverpool, [Homebaked CLT](#):

- Began as group of concerned locals witnessing demise of neighbourhood and failing top-down enforced gentrification programmes
- Established the CLT around the question of “what do we mean by living well?”
- Identified that people need a place to be together - such places becoming frequently less available
- Has developed into a 3 pronged programme of connecting the high street and enterprise spaces, developing and holding local networks, and developing a long term vision manifesto for the neighbourhood, which includes retrofitting a terrace of homes

Longer case study here.

Case Studies

Link Road/Civic Sq

"Reimagining economic possibilities"

A community organisation in Birmingham, [Civic Square](#):

- Taking a long term and deep approach to engagement within a community, building on what is already there
- Creates space for people to access easily so they don't feel they have to do something or give something to participate
- **Directly involve residents/citizens in understanding funding, regulatory and upskilling landscapes**
- Builds the civic infrastructure to unlock and support latent potential in the neighbourhood

Longer case study here.

PPR

"Homes for a low carbon future"

A Community Benefit Society focused on owner occupier retrofit, [People Powered Retrofit](#):

- Operates a 'bottom up' approach to build on assets that already exist at a neighbourhood scale
- Take into account complex, interlinked factors including quality, service provision, trust, environmental and health concerns
- Worked directly with the local authority to review policy to identify ways for planning policies and processes to be used more effectively, scaling up retrofit whilst maintaining quality
- Found 'payback' was not key barrier or driving factor for decision making - contradicting common view. Rather, householders influenced by a range of intangible motivations and drivers

Longer case study here.

Case Studies

Loco Home Retrofit

"Better retrofit, made more accessible to more people"

A Community Interest Company focused on owner occupier retrofit, [Loco Home Retrofit](#):

- Supporting energy conscious home improvement in Glasgow
- Capacity is an issue in able to pay as the literacy on the why and how isn't strong
- Engagement is crucial and helps built the market but time consuming and slow because of limited funding
- Investing in collaborative initiatives to aggregate demand and ensure high quality and risk managed offer
- Role of intermediary crucial but vastly underfunded and unsupported

Longer case study [here](#).

Becontree

"Our future Beacontree"

Based on analysis of 60yrs of area-based regeneration, [Onward](#) found that most successful approaches focused on:

- Ensuring that communities have a stake in the regeneration process, including by putting local people in charge of priorities, devolving budgets, and building new community-level institutions
- Smaller areas such as neighbourhoods
- Building community capacity, civic assets and participation over longer periods of time
- Improvements in the lived experience
- Sustainable sources of revenue

Longer case study [here](#).

Learning from beyond retrofit

Cooperation Town

A network of food Cooperatives in Camden in London,

[Cooperation Town](#):

- Sees building community and getting to know neighbours as first priority and the food comes after
- Benefits are cost savings through demand aggregation and learning community organisation skills
- Wider social issues are addressed including loneliness and education around healthy eating, budget management, and sustainability, circular economy principles and landfill reduction

Longer case study [here](#).

Energy Futures Oldham

A place based project supported by Carbon Coop [Oldham](#)

[Energy Futures](#):

- Began by asking: How can local people improve the power, heat and transport systems that serve them whilst benefiting their neighbourhood?
- Believes putting citizens at the front and centre of decision making and participation by residents provided the opportunity to share views and lived experiences of living and working in Westwood, which has informed this Community Led Energy Plan
- Oldham Energy Futures aims to deliver 9 benefits for Sholver, Westwood and the wider community including local energy plans, seed funded projects, new skills and an online hub

Longer case study [here](#).

Learning from beyond retrofit

We Can Make

A community land trust and neighbourhood test-space in Bristol, [We Can Make](#) found that:

- The neighbourhood is a key site within which to seed and grow social and economic change
- Local authorities can play a vital role in supporting housing innovation through being open to community-led activity and ideas on issues such as planning, land disposal, and housing allocations
- Furthermore local authorities can assist in easing some of the steps that are unnecessarily slow and difficult through adjusting policy to simplify and standardise the process, making replication easier

Longer case study [here](#).

Regeneration in the UK

Based on analysis of 60yrs of area-based regeneration, [Onward](#) found that most successful approaches focused on:

- Ensuring that communities have a stake in the regeneration process, including by putting local people in charge of priorities, devolving budgets, and building new community-level institutions
- Smaller areas such as neighbourhoods
- Building community capacity, civic assets and participation over longer periods of time
- Improvements in the lived experience
- Sustainable sources of revenue

Longer case study [here](#).

What YOU can do next...

- 1. Get in touch with us at:**

healourhomes@gmail.com or info@darkmatterlabs.org

Use “Community Powered Retrofit” in the subject line

We are happy to receive feedback, discuss collaboration, and develop ideas. Tell us about examples and learnings from your projects.

- 2. Start mapping your community retrofit pathways**

By understanding your ecosystem of organised communities you can begin to build out opportunities for collective action on delivering community powered retrofit

- 3. Share this document with interested stakeholders in your network**

We believe in knowledge sharing and collaboration

- 4. Seek out, Support, or Develop training opportunities within your communities:**

There are many skills required to advance the retrofit journey, from organisational to technical.

About

This **Phase 1** work was carried out by Dark Matter Labs and Home Energy Action Lab based on case study research as the first phase of work. **Phase 2** will include deeper engagement with stakeholders followed by the development of the pathways identified into a set of detailed and actionable 'playbooks' which in turn support **Phase 3**, piloting, that will support Councils in their journey towards accelerating retrofit and achieving their ambitious targets by 2030.

Dark Matter Labs is a not-for-profit international strategic design agency working on systems challenges mainly in the built environment. DML is working on a number of place-based retrofit projects across the UK and EU.

Home Energy Action Lab is a Community Benefit Society focused on strategic consultancy and advocacy for best practice low carbon retrofit in the community.

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)