

## Commitment to Retrofit in Hertfordshire

### INTRODUCTION

This Commitment outlines a collaborative, cross-sector approach to retrofit in Hertfordshire, addressing climate change, health and wellbeing and economic inequalities. Retrofit is one of the most impactful actions we can take to enhance both our environment and our resilience, improve economic growth and tackle health disparities.

For the purposes of this document, retrofit refers to any improvement work on an existing domestic building which improves its energy efficiency, through making it easier to heat, increasing its ability to retain heat for longer, and through replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. The retrofit system refers to the myriad of actors and factors that influence whether and how a home is retrofitted, including individuals and organisations who own or manage homes, or provide the materials, skills, funding, marketing, permissions and desire to undertake effective retrofit.

The retrofit system is complex and interconnected. This Commitment will articulate the power of aligned working to a common goal across the many facets of the retrofit system of Hertfordshire.

## **Foreword by Alastair Mumford, The MCS Foundation**

“The Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (“LARA”) project aims to create sustainable, local markets for retrofit and build the supply chain by helping local communities to develop and deliver a retrofit strategy together. Many councils in Hertfordshire have declared a climate emergency and in 2022 the built environment was responsible for 28% of the county’s greenhouse gas emissions, the second largest emitting sector after transport. Improving how we heat, cool and power our homes and buildings is one of the most effective ways to address the climate crisis.”

DRAFT

This document builds on the collaborative efforts of the LARA project in Hertfordshire and sets the pace and ambition for the county's retrofit agenda. We are proud to initiate a Retrofit Partnership for Hertfordshire with a mission to: *“Collaborate in Hertfordshire to retrofit all homes in need, so that we enhance our environment and climate resilience, address fuel poverty, improve health and support local jobs.”*

Our vision is that *“Every home is fit for now and for our future”*. The LARA project has shown that local authorities, training providers, construction organisations, social housing providers, community energy groups and other stakeholders in Hertfordshire are committed to and endorse this documented long-term programme. It is co-owned, flexible, and resilient, even in the face of political, financial, and social changes.

This document is endorsed by the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, a partnership of all 10 district and borough councils, the county council and Hertfordshire Futures, as well as the participating colleges and training providers, housing associations, heritage groups, community organisations and contractors that helped to co-create it.

## **The Need for Retrofit**

For the UK to make its fair contribution in mitigating climate change and meet its legal net-zero target by 2050, most homes and other buildings need to make significant savings in greenhouse gas emissions. Existing homes account for around 20% of UK emissions and 80% of the anticipated housing stock in 2050 has already been built. Retrofitting has been found to be the most efficient and effective way to decarbonise our current building stock as indicated by the UK Climate Change Committee. In addition, retrofit offers many benefits beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions:

- increased comfort with homes that are warmer in winter and cooler in summer, with greater ability to withstand future climate conditions
- energy savings and lower bills
- protection against rising energy prices
- reduced noise disturbance and improved air quality, helping prevent respiratory illnesses
- support for local jobs and economic growth.
- respond to and preserve heritage buildings in a changing climate

## **The LARA Process**

The LARA project brought together expertise from across Hertfordshire, using a systems-based, multi-agency approach to create this document. LARA is funded by The MCS Foundation, Greater South East Net Zero Hub and Aurora. It is delivered in collaboration with Ashden, Built Environment – Smarter Transformation, Connected Places Catapult, National Retrofit Hub, and the UK Green Building Council.

Through workshops and established partnerships, we have identified key objectives for increasing retrofit demand, capacity, and supply and agreed principles to inform how future system stewardship will be managed by the stakeholders.

- Work together.
- Evidence-led.
- Sustainably minded.
- Ambitious but realistic.

The outcomes from these discussions were grouped into four main goals as set out below.

The goals and subgoals were agreed, with suggested actions to be considered by the to-be-convened Hertfordshire Retrofit Partnership.

## **Goal 1**

### **1. Increase uptake and successful delivery of retrofit advice and measures**

- 1.1 Increase access to trusted advice and guidance.
- 1.2 Increase retrofit investment in private housing.
- 1.3 Increase retrofit investment in social housing.

This Goal aims to significantly increase the volume of retrofit measures being carried out in Hertfordshire and thereby become 'fit for now and the future'. By targeting private homeowners, private landlords and social landlords, we can address different needs and leverage different funding opportunities, addressing the necessity of reliable and consistent financial stability. The focus is on facilitating action and encouraging investment through grants and support.

## **Goal 2**

### **2. Realise the co-benefits of retrofit in the locality (Hertfordshire geography)**

- 2.1 Increase local economic benefits of retrofit.
- 2.2 Increase health and wellbeing benefits of retrofit.
- 2.3 Increase environmental benefits of retrofit.

This Goal focuses on maximising the benefit of retrofit to the locality to build a stronger business case and encourage greater engagement with the story of its success. This Goal will also help to reinforce the benefit of retrofit to stakeholders involved in delivering the strategy.

## **Goal 3**

### **3. Increase local supply chain capacity and quality through better access and control of resources, data and shared understanding**

- 3.1 Ensure adequate training capacity and quality.
- 3.2 Increase demand for training.
- 3.3 Increase quality of retrofit work.
- 3.4 Communicate clear access routes to the retrofit marketplace for supply chain.

Meeting the growing demand anticipated from the first Goal requires an enhanced supply chain including skilled workers and trusted suppliers. Importantly, for delivery of the Vision, this Goal also works towards ensuring quality within the supply chain. A key part of this Goal is ensuring that training programmes, business growth opportunities and career paths are available, particularly for micro and SME businesses.

## **Goal 4**

### **4. Create a confident, trusted retrofit environment**

- 4.1 Ensure local policies support retrofit.
- 4.2 Develop suitable governance and delivery arrangements.
- 4.3 Increase collaboration, sharing of data and learning.

This Goal ensures that the strategic framework for retrofit has strong governance and transparent, supportive policies and arrangements to ensure continued collaboration, data sharing and learning. Much of the retrofit system is affected by public policy and this Goal covers policy-related actions.

DRAFT

## Next Steps

Following endorsement of this Commitment by stakeholders, the next immediate steps following the launch of this document will be for stakeholders to establish the Hertfordshire Retrofit Body (the “Body” - name tbc) which will define the Terms of Reference, membership, and governance.

This Body would then need to create a formally constituted delivery structure to support the retrofit programme including:

- supporting the delivery of its constituent members’ shared building retrofit goals, notably those contained within this document;
- commissioning work in response to its constituent members’ shared priorities.

The Body’s first task will be to agree and approve a data-driven Retrofit Strategy and action plan(s) to identify and allocate resources for delivery. This Strategy, developed through the LARA project, will set out actions and priority actions that align with the shared vision outlined in this Commitment. Stakeholders have identified immediate actions for priority investigation:

- develop a delivery vehicle, owned by stakeholders, which implements retrofit measures efficiently to share risk and increase benefit
- establish a mechanism to promote trusted suppliers to ensure quality and capacity within the supply chain
- prioritise early-stage actions to build momentum for wider implementation, creating a roadmap of tiered actions as capacity and resource permits.

The Body may also form time-limited working groups consisting of representatives from some or all of its members to address specific projects such as:

- progressing a Retrofit Facilitation Service to:
  - raise awareness, provide advice and general information
  - coordinate existing markets to engage and progress suppliers; AND / OR
  - take on full renovation responsibility for works and the customer journey
- creating a monitoring and reporting framework for KPIs and progress.



**We are proud to support and endorse this Commitment to Retrofit in Hertfordshire.**

**March 2025**

<logos>

***Alphabetised and equal sized logos here.***

***[small print on the logos page]***

## **Implementation**

To implement this Commitment:

- all stakeholders take the document through their own internal processes for endorsement and adoption
- Hertfordshire Climate Change & Sustainability Partnership will formally endorse the Commitment
- Hertfordshire Growth Board will also formally endorse the Commitment
- there will be no revenue or capital liabilities from a stakeholder adopting this document and its principles
- the Body will then formalise its governance arrangements, develop a data-led Retrofit Strategy and create detailed action plans.