

East Midlands Local Area Retrofit Accelerator

Workshop 2 Report, April 2025

Executive Summary

The second of the East Midlands LARA workshops took place on Thursday 3rd April, bringing together key stakeholders from across the East Midlands Combined Authority area to consolidate a shared understanding of the retrofit system, agree a collective vision for collaborating on retrofit in the East Midlands, and begin to identify strategic priorities for change in the retrofit system.

Working group reports

At Workshop 2, working groups presented outputs focused on key areas to support the East Midlands Retrofit Strategy.

- The Skills group presented a SWOT and forcefield analysis, emphasising the need for collaboration and the creation of an East Midlands Retrofit Skills Network to address workforce gaps. They highlighted the importance of vocational education, apprenticeships, and industry-academia partnerships.
- The Tech group focused on improving the implementation of current retrofit technologies, increasing public understanding, and developing tools for data sharing and standardisation.
- The Trust group addressed the importance of building trust in retrofit by tackling issues such as public confusion and misinformation, proposing a coordinated approach to information through trusted intermediaries and clearer communication. A poll revealed strong support for more coordination among advice providers under a single brand.

Executive Summary

Developing a vision and a mission - where are we going?

The Vision working group presented a draft Vision and Mission statement to guide the East Midlands Retrofit Strategy, aiming to unite efforts towards decarbonising homes. The Vision, "A just and fair future in which we're all living in efficient, healthy homes within a sustainable regional economy," and the Mission, "We will bring consistency, simplicity and affordability to improving the performance of our homes," were reviewed and refined at Workshop 2. The Vision statement was revised to read: "A just and fair future in which we're all living in healthy, energy-efficiency homes within sustainable communities", and the Mission statement: "We will bring simplicity, affordability and a joined-up approach to improving our homes and boosting our low-carbon economy." While the Vision was generally well-received, with 62% agreeing with the revised version, participants suggested further refinements, such as adding elements of climate resilience and low carbon, and emphasising skills development and quality. Similarly, the Mission statement, which focused on simplicity and affordability, garnered 67% support, but suggestions included incorporating terms like collaboration, quality of design, and acceleration to highlight the urgency of retrofit efforts. The statements will be further reviewed before Workshop 3.

East Midlands retrofit activity and learning - what can we learn?

The session showcased local and wider retrofit initiatives, with speakers sharing insights on projects that address environmental and health challenges through home energy improvements and increase access to financial support. Rosie Cunningham highlighted the health benefits of retrofitting, David Arkle emphasised a collaborative approach to grant making in Amber Valley, Pete Burgess-Allen and Miranda Cumberbatch presented the Heat Hub's work with hard-to-treat homes, and Emma Lower discussed Lendology's financial support for energy upgrades. These projects demonstrated the importance of community engagement, clear communication, and innovative strategies in advancing retrofit efforts to improve health, reduce energy costs, and tackle socio-economic inequalities.

Executive Summary

Principles

In this session, participants identified key principles to guide the retrofit strategy and inform priorities. Two central themes emerged: a focus on people and ensuring easy access to retrofit, and a commitment to creating long-term, sustainable value. Principles emphasised the importance of customer-centered approaches, accessibility, integrity, and providing homes that support health. Additionally, collaboration, alignment, and a pragmatic yet action-oriented mindset were highlighted, alongside a commitment to future-proofing and delivering good value, both socially and economically. These principles, following further refinement, will serve as the 'compass' for the East Midlands Local Retrofit Strategy, ensuring it stays true to our collective values.

Retrofit system game and action planning for the LARA strategy

During the workshop, participants engaged in a simulation game designed to explore collaborative action and test approaches to systemic change for the East Midlands Retrofit Strategy. In Round 1, participants worked individually, encountering challenges such as fragmentation and resource mismanagement, while identifying the need for a common goal and better coordination. Round 2 involved collaboration, leading to improved sequencing and resource management, with key insights about the importance of planning, coordination, and leveraging relationships. The follow-up discussion focused on identifying priority actions for the strategy, including establishing a coordinating body, generating public awareness, exploring diverse funding options (e.g. grants, lending solutions, green bonds etc), addressing skills shortages, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. These priorities will inform the Local Retrofit Strategy alongside the actions generated by working groups and in previous workshops.

Executive Summary

What's Next?

Workshop 3: Developing the Retrofit Strategy for the East Midlands - *19th May 2025*

Workshop 3 will involve finalising the strategic objectives to establish a clear and unified direction. We will continue to develop agreement on agreeing on priorities, pathways, and governance and accountability mechanisms. Finally, we will celebrate the progress made and acknowledge our collective achievements and inspire continued momentum.

Before Workshop 3, the key work involves sharing and gaining support for the vision, engaging missing stakeholders, and finalising the principles and mission. Governance recommendations will be developed, alongside the development of strategic goals and actions.

Working Groups

The Working Groups have been tasked with navigating identified challenges and articulating what would be needed to overcome them. It is likely therefore that some existing Working Groups will reconvene before 19th May to ensure progress. Working groups on Skills, Tech and Trust will refine their proposals to feed into the strategy. New working groups on Governance and Strategic Goals and Actions will be convened.

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LARA: History and purpose

The Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (LARA) was launched by the [MCS Foundation](#) in response to the Climate Change Committee's warning that progress in reducing carbon emissions from home heating and addressing fuel poverty is way off target. LARA introduces a systems and place-based approach to accelerate retrofit activity, transforming energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in homes. It aims to improve the coordination of local initiatives, laying the foundation for expanding retrofit efforts across communities and kickstarting effective action.

The LARA pilot will test a process for rapidly co-developing Local Retrofit Strategies with key stakeholders to drive collaborative action and maximise funding and financing opportunities.

Dark Matter Labs was contracted to design the Strategy "Co-design" process, which has three phases:

- Developing Shared Understanding,
- Developing a Vision, a Theory of Change and a Strategy
- Review, Endorsement and Early Action.

Strategy Co-design is the second part of a broader process, which begins with engaging local system stakeholders and ends with delivering, reviewing and evaluating the Strategy.

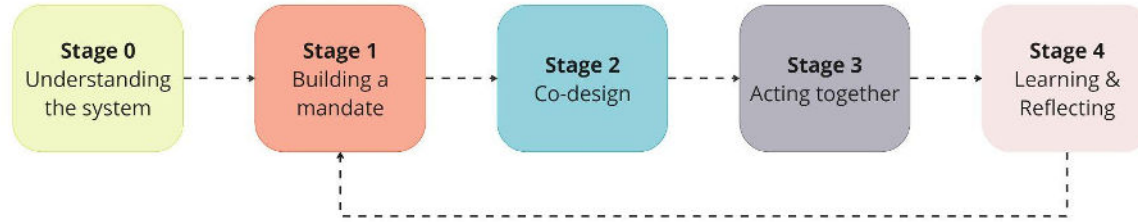
In summer 2024 there was an application process for local authority areas to join the pilot LARA process and four areas were selected, of which the East Midlands is the third to pilot the process.

Description of the LARA process

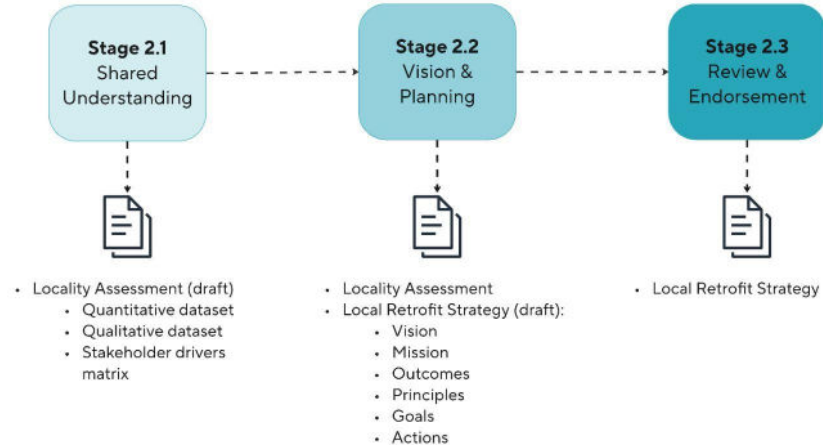
Stakeholders across the East Midlands Combined Authority area (Derby/Derbyshire, Nottingham/Nottinghamshire) are coming together in a facilitated, participatory process to establish a shared vision for accelerating domestic retrofit, and develop a plan to move in the direction of the vision. The process is developing a Local Retrofit Strategy, which will include a summary of the current system, a vision and principles, strategic goals and a theory of change, a three-year action plan, a monitoring and evaluation plan, and an approach to governance and accountability. The final draft of the strategy will be reviewed by senior representatives and once agreed, it is expected that stakeholders will sign up to the strategy, kick-starting effective, collaborative retrofit action.

East Midlands LARA process is hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council and Bolsover District Council. It will run from February 2025 to May 2025. Workshop 1 took place on February 24th at Nottingham Council House, and Workshop 2 on April 3rd at The Old Library Building, Derby.

LARA process



2. Co-design



Workshop 2

Purpose of LARA Workshop 2

Purpose: bring new participants into the East Midlands LARA process, and foster wider engagement and collaboration.

Aims:

- Bring new people into the LARA process.
- Agree a collective vision and mission for the Local Retrofit Strategy.
- Develop principles, priority actions and pathways to retrofit systems change (theory of change).
- Make plans to progress specific pieces of work before Workshop 3

Summary of Workshop 2

The workshop engaged participants in advancing the East Midlands LARA strategy for retrofit, introducing new members, fostering collaboration, and building a shared sense of purpose. The day began with a welcoming orientation and networking session that set the context for the LARA programme and its ongoing work. Participants heard from the various Working Groups, and then reviewed the proposed vision and mission for the Local retrofit Strategy. The morning also featured valuable insights from existing local and wider retrofit work, showcasing past and current efforts.

The afternoon focused on finalising the shared vision and mission for adoption through a voting process. A hands-on simulation, the Retrofit System Game, allowed participants to experiment with potential actions and strategies for systemic change, providing a deeper understanding of the retrofit system and different perspectives. This was followed by a discussion on prioritising actions and suggesting strategic goals for collective action.

The event concluded with a session on next steps, outlining objectives for the upcoming workshop and plans for interim work, while reinforcing the importance of continued collaboration to drive the East Midlands retrofit strategy forward.

Who are we?

Workshop 2 Attendance List

David Arkle	Amber Valley Borough Council	Latifimran Jalil	Broxtowe Borough Council
Mark Armstrong-Read	Derbyshire Community Health Services	Mick Keenan	Impact Energy Ltd
Amir Aziz	HACT	Phil Keynes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Stuart Bacon	North East Derbyshire District Council	John Kinderman	Derbyshire County Council
Mike Bentham	Rider Levett Bucknall (RLB)	Stiley Kraid	Gippod Innovation
Justine Biggs	EON	Becky Lane	Furbnow
James Blackett	Highfield Surveyors	Phil Lord	Mansfield District Council
Michael Blackham	Groundwork Five Counties	Emma Lower	Lendology
Peter Burgess-Allen	Marches Energy Agency	Rachel Macrorie	Nottingham Trent University
Kaz Cole	Impact Energy Ltd	Ian Mather	Daikin
Philip Cole	Derbyshire Community Bank	Emma McKim	EON
David Collier	Soltherm EWI	Augusta Moore	Nottingham Energy Partnership
Scott Connell	SCE Electrical & Air Conditioning Services	Sam Palmer	Gedling Borough Council
Jonathan Corasmin	South Derbyshire District Council	Sonia Pathak-Armour	E.ON Next
Miranda Cumberbatch	Nottingham Energy Partnership	Darryl Plummer	Groundwork Greater Nottingham
Jon Davis	YES - Energy Solutions	Chris Pryke-Hendy	Nottingham Community Housing Association
Jon Fearon	Vision West Nottinghamshire College	Bill Purvis	National Energy Action
Peter Fletcher	Erewash Borough Council	Charlotte Reardon	Bassetlaw District Council
Chris Goodings	Derby College		

Workshop 2 Attendance List

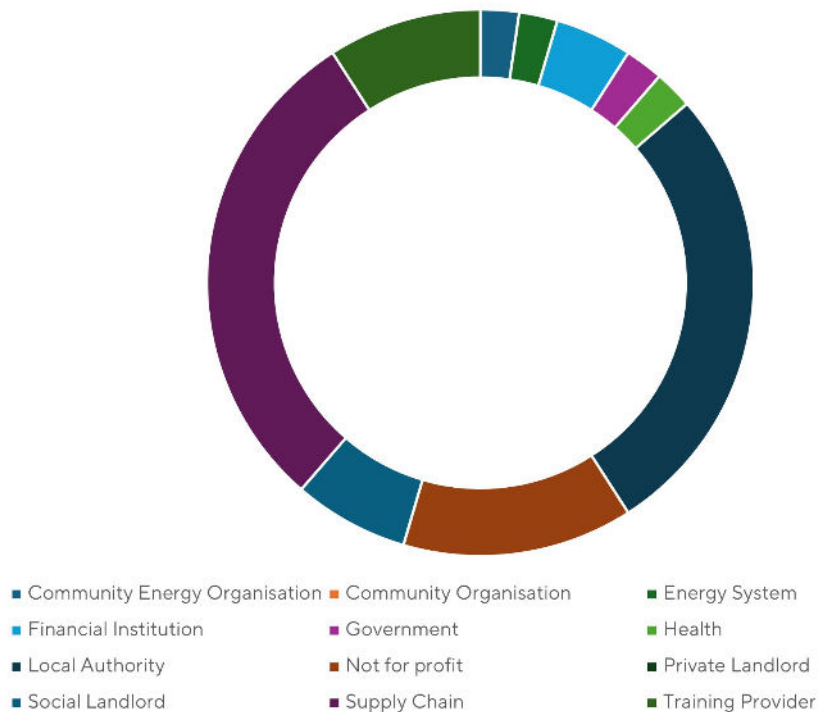
Chris Samson	University of Derby
Mike Siebert	Nottingham Trent University
Kate Simpson	Nottingham Trent University
Stuart Smith	Derby City Council
Sean Stevenson	Westville Group
Angus Stuart	Eco-Landlord
Chris Viner	Community Home Solutions
Carolynne Watson	Nottingham City Council
Lisa Williams	Highfield Surveyors Ltd
Joanne Wilson	Bolsover District Council

Workshop 2 Attendance

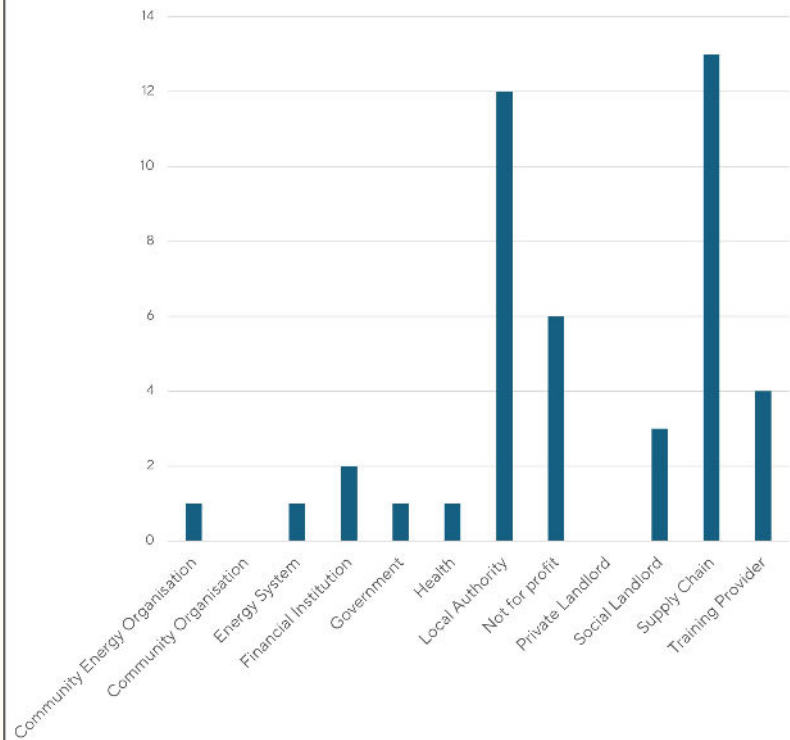
The charts on the following 3 slides show the numbers of and percentage of for the different tiers of organisations represented at the workshops. We have defined organisations over three tiers. Tier 1 is the overall organisation type (for example a social landlord), tier 2 takes this down to a more specific level (for example a local authority social landlord or private social landlord and then tier 3 to a departmental level where appropriate (for example a social landlord asset manager or social landlord sustainability officer). With LARA taking a systems-based approach, we believe the more engagement across the system the better and see each of the tiers being important. A learning from the pilot will be level of system representation input versus quality of the output.

Workshop 2 Attendance

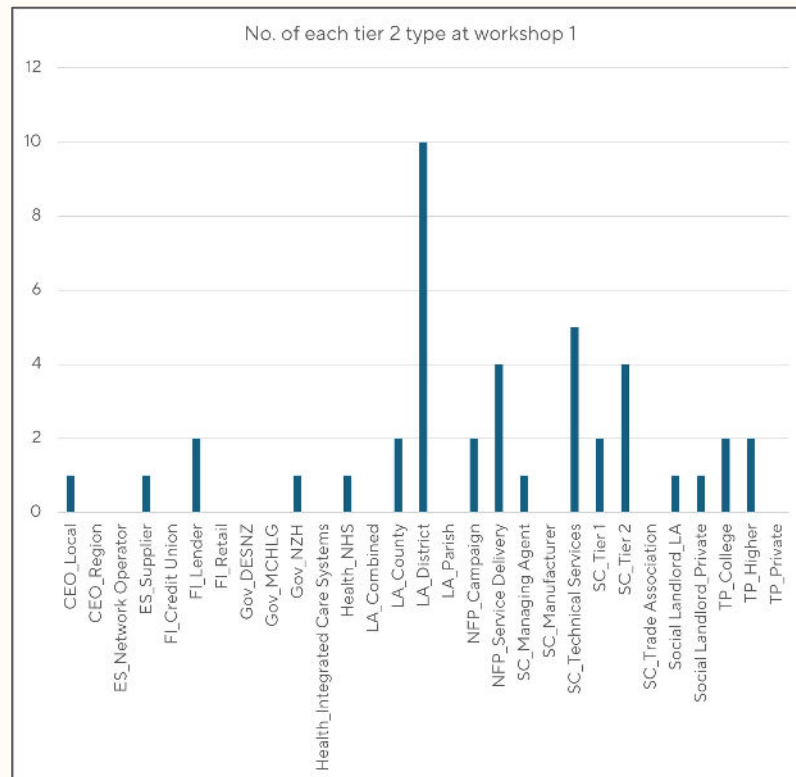
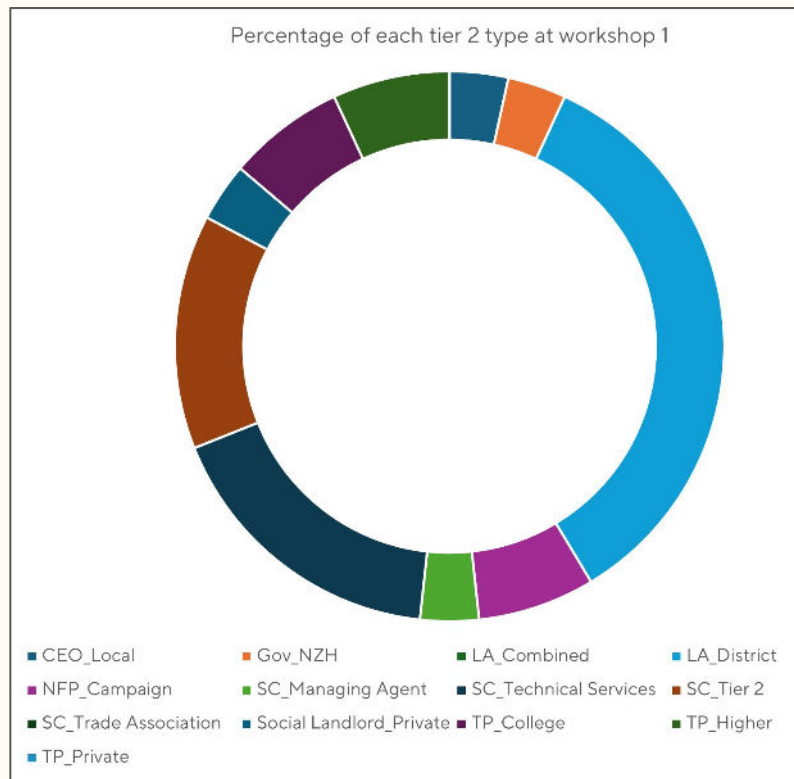
Percentage of each type of organisation at workshop 1



No. of each organisation type at workshop 1

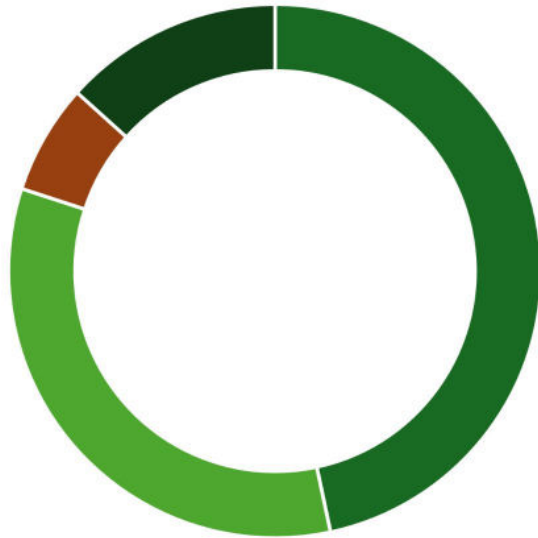


Workshop 2 Attendance



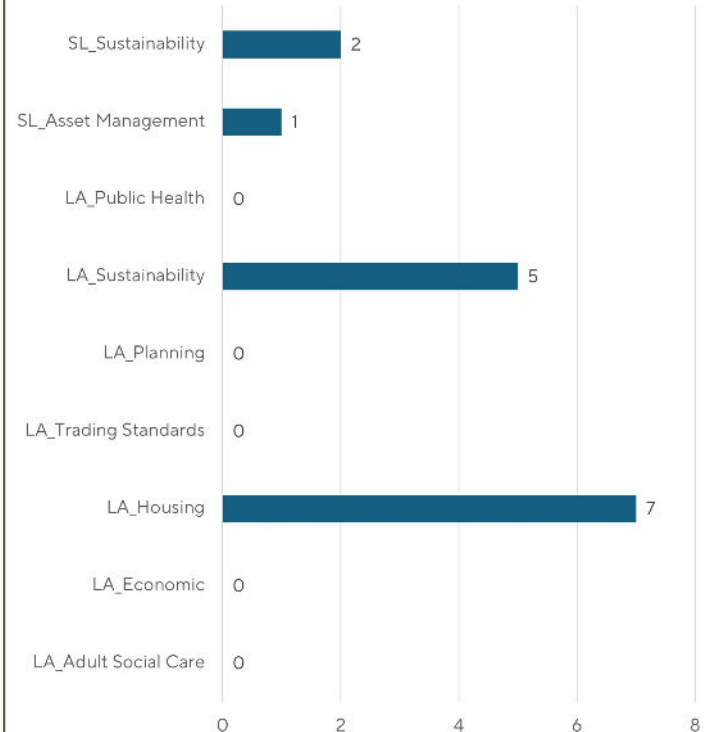
Workshop 2 Attendance

Percentage of each tier 3 type represented at workshop



■ LA_Adult Social Care ■ LA_Economic ■ LA_Housing
■ LA_Trading Standards ■ LA_Planning ■ LA_Sustainability
■ LA_Public Health ■ SL_Asset Management ■ SL_Sustainability

No. of each tier 3 type represented at workshop 1



What work has been going on?

Working Group Reports

At the end of Workshop 1, we discussed what areas of work we needed to focus on before we met again in March. The following 4 areas were identified:

1. Trust in retrofit
2. Skills and labour shortages
3. Vision for the Local Retrofit Strategy
4. Technologies

Between then and Workshop 2, the groups worked to prepare an output that could be shared at either Workshop 2 or 3 that would feed into the East Midlands Retrofit Strategy.

The Vision working group came to Workshop 2 with a draft Vision and Mission statement, that was reviewed, critiqued and revised during the course of the day. More details about this can be found on [slides](#).

The skills, tech and trust working group outputs were also presented, and can be found on the next slide.

Skills Working Group

The Skills working group presented a SWOT and forcefield analysis. These emphasised the importance of collaboration and strategic alignment to address retrofit skills gaps in the East Midlands, and the need to form an East Midlands Retrofit Skills Network to build on existing research and avoid duplication. They stressed that collaboration between universities, colleges, and industry is crucial, especially through industry-academia initiatives. A multi-disciplinary approach to retrofit training, focusing on low-carbon construction, modern methods, procurement, and digital technologies, was also highlighted. Prioritising vocational education and training (VET), with an emphasis on level 3 and 4 skills, apprenticeships, and placements, is essential to developing a skilled workforce.

The SWOT details how despite strengths like funding for skills, the Local Skills Improvement Plan, and regional investment opportunities such as the East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ), challenges remain, including high unemployment, an ageing workforce, and significant skills shortages in green construction. SMEs face barriers to accessing training funding, and non-green construction work limits business incentives for training investment. Additionally, the region risks losing trained talent without secure employment pipelines and guaranteed job opportunities. Addressing these barriers while fostering collaboration across stakeholders is key to building an effective retrofit workforce in the region.

The SWOT and forcefield analysis visuals can be found on the next 2 slides.

Skills Working Group

FUNDING

- a) EMIZ - Total skills & employment: £13.5m
- b) EM Freeport - £2m in Future Energy Skills Hub (FESH)
- c) EM Chamber Accelerator project (£8.9m) to support businesses in areas including net zero
- d) Youth Guarantee Trailblazer (YGT): £5m to support young people (18-21) not in education, employment or training.

ACTIVE R&D

- 1. **EMIZ Skills Sprint** on Green Construction (NTU) & on Renewable Energy (Derby Uni) to inform EMIZ Skills roadmap & pipeline of skills investments.
- 2. **EMIZ research & innovation sprint** on Green Construction & Renewable Energy Sector (NTU) includes labour & skills challenge to inform innovation roadmap & initial pilot investment.
- 3. **UK mapping of VET system for Repair Maintenance Improvement** sector with focus on energy efficiency (NTU - to inform CITB Sector Skills Plan)

Training provision in EM

1. New £30m Automated Distribution & Manufacturing Centre (**ADMC**) **training centre** to boost green skills in Kirkby-in-Ashfield
2. **West Nottinghamshire College** Expansion of existing construction centre & new civil engineering centre
3. **Centre for Sustainable Construction & Retrofit (NTU)** - interdisciplinary social science research specialising in VET & supply chain
4. **NTU new Retrofit Coordinator diploma** (Trustmark Accredited)

Strengths

Funding for Skills & Employment through decreased complexity over previous Parliament

Some existing strategy e.g. Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire produced by Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) & AECMA - to give employers a strengthened role in shaping local skills provision. Building strategic efforts through end green construction focussed.

Active R&D on Retrofit workforce skills & vocational education & training (VET)

Weaknesses

High EM unemployment (5.6% compared to national ave 4.3%, Feb to April 2024) & greater in urban centres.

Region faces particular challenge in terms of higher-level qualifications & skilled recruits compared to rest of UK. Difficulty in attracting capable, competent talent.

As per rest of the UK, an ageing workforce which has low levels of diversity & inclusivity.

D2N2 region experiencing significant skills shortages in green construction & energy efficiency retrofit sectors

Investment in Education & Training centres, research & course provision for the sector

Regional Devolution - provides greater flexibility and control to develop place-based interventions across region. "Empower local authorities. Consolidating role provision tailored to meet local industry & economic needs.

Risk that can't keep recruits in region after employers invest in their training / apprenticeships

Difficult for SME employers to access funding to enable training

Prevalence of BIM construction work that is not 'green'. Limited drivers for businesses to invest in training

East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ) & Freeport - opportunity for inward investment in labour force to promote economic growth for region (Green Construction & Renewable Energy)

Lack of skills and experienced labour is costing money - BIM costs 10% higher than VML. Investing in more skilled people will pay off

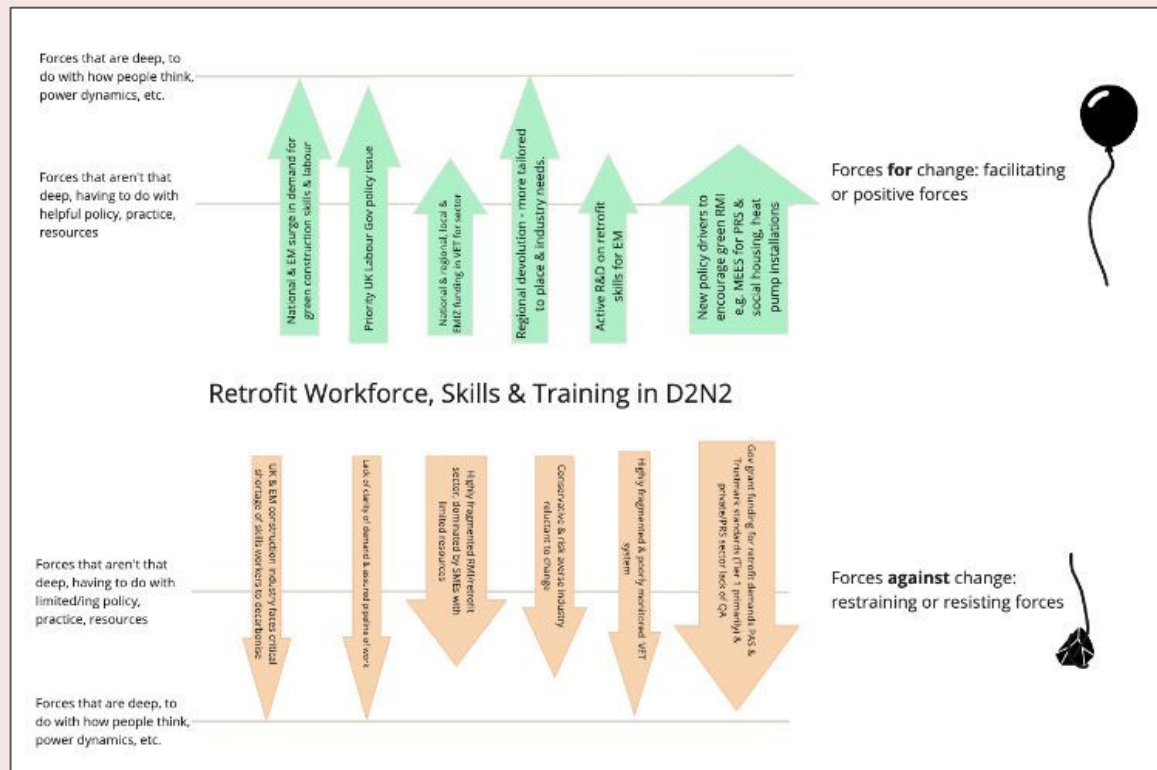
Advanced manufacturing and clean energy industries recognised as key growth-driving sectors for the region (EM Chamber of Commerce). Opts to support EM's energy clean. Does this also decou from VML for retrofit?

Limited assured job prospects after training - need to create a secure employment pipeline (as trainees often underemployed)

Opportunities

Threats

Skills Working Group



Tech Working Group

The Tech working group shared what their key areas of focus were:

1. How to better implement current established retrofit technologies
2. Helping improve households understanding of current technologies to increase likelihood of take up
3. Driving quality in retrofit
4. Using data to understanding what retrofit technologies people want, need in their homes

They shared emerging proposals for key actions for the Local Retrofit Strategy: :

1. Increase data sharing
2. Develop a standardised home retrofit survey tool that outputs surveys to e.g. 5 approved retrofit contractors
3. Develop an archetype tool, to help householders understand what retrofit measures their home may require, and feedback into a retrofit database
4. Develop a trusted 'signposting' tool to help householders find trusted, factually correct, jargon free information on retrofit technologies

Trust Working Group

The Trust working group's presentation emphasised the critical role of trust in retrofitting due to its complexity and cost. Public confusion exists over aspects like grants, quality assurance, and installer legitimacy, with concerns about inconsistent and poor-quality information. To address this, there's a need for a trusted intermediary and clear, accessible resources. Encouraging local builders and installers to engage in retrofitting, alongside training programs like an Ambassador Scheme, is essential to growing the market. Councils are also playing a key role by providing lists of approved contractors to ensure legitimacy.

Three key channels for building trust were highlighted:

- Amongst the building and repair sector
- Amongst consumers/householders
- Amongst community networks

The group propose establishing a 'one-stop-shop' with a single brand for consumers, and creating easily understandable householder guides, focusing on clarity and appropriate language. Peer-to-peer engagement, showcasing successful retrofits, and leveraging initiatives like Trustmark and quality assurance programs are also important. Additionally, working with community networks and local groups could help to foster collective action and create a movement around retrofitting. Tailored marketing strategies aimed at different audiences are also essential for success.

The group asked stakeholders to select their preference via a menti poll, for the creation of a one-stop shop approach. The choices given can be found below, and the results on slide 29:

1. Continue as now - many different uncoordinated sources of information
2. More coordination, possibly partnership agreement, between advice providers operating under one single brand and 'front door,' more signposting between sources
3. A single source of trusted information across the region - one single commissioned provider

Trust in retrofit: How does the problem show up?



What are the solutions ?





Forces **for** change: facilitating
or positive forces

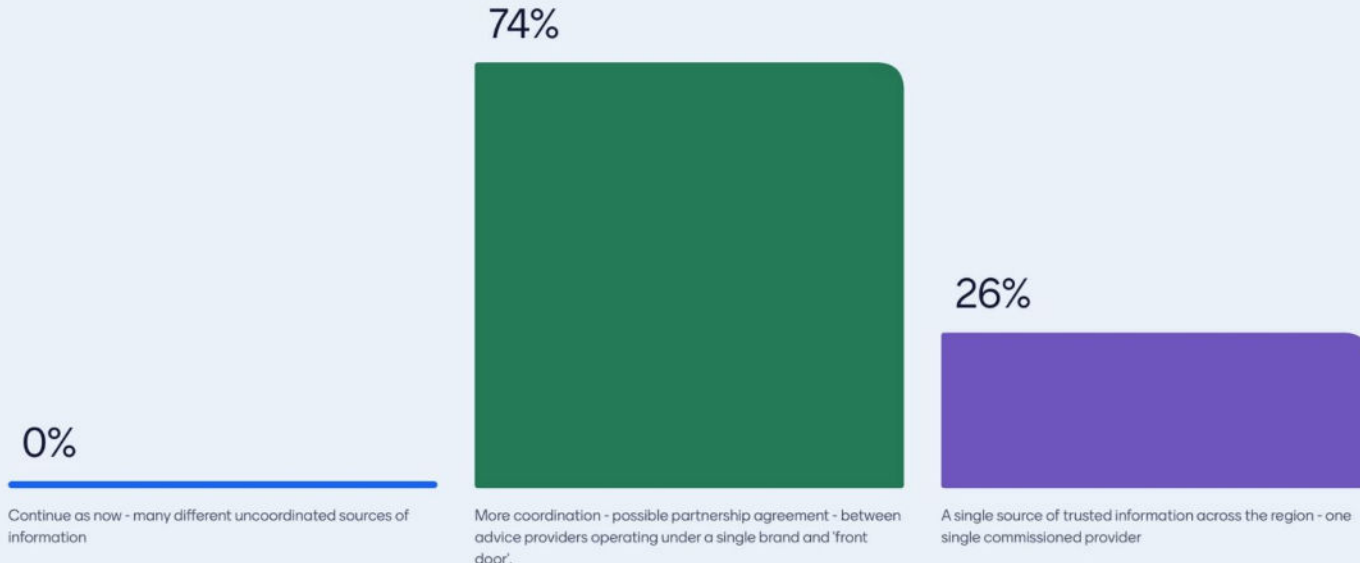
building trust in retrofit



Trust Working Group: One-Stop-Shop Poll

Mentimeter

what is your preferred option for a retrofit advice 'one stop shop' ?



Trust Working Group: One-Stop-Shop Poll

The results of the Menti poll clearly indicate that there is a resounding appetite for option 2:

'More coordination, possibly partnership agreement, between advice providers operating under one single brand and 'front door,' more signposting between sources'.

There is much less support for the development of a single, commissioned one-stop-shop.

The next step will be to develop these proposals in more detail so that they can be endorsed by the Local Retrofit Strategy. The Governance working group should also consider what this might mean for future governance and organising arrangements.

Where are we heading?

Developing a Vision and a Mission

We are developing a retrofit strategy to guide collaborative work to decarbonise homes across the East Midlands, which needs a motivating vision to bring people together. A vision describes where we want to get to, whilst a mission describes how we will achieve the vision. The following vision and mission was developed by the Vision working group considering a range of organisational Visions brought to Workshop 1, and the motivations that brought people into LARA:

Vision: “A just and fair future in which we're all living in efficient, healthy homes within a sustainable regional economy.”

Mission: “We will bring consistency, simplicity and affordability to improving the performance of our homes.”

At the second workshop, participants considered whether they were happy with this vision or if there was anything that they felt was missing.

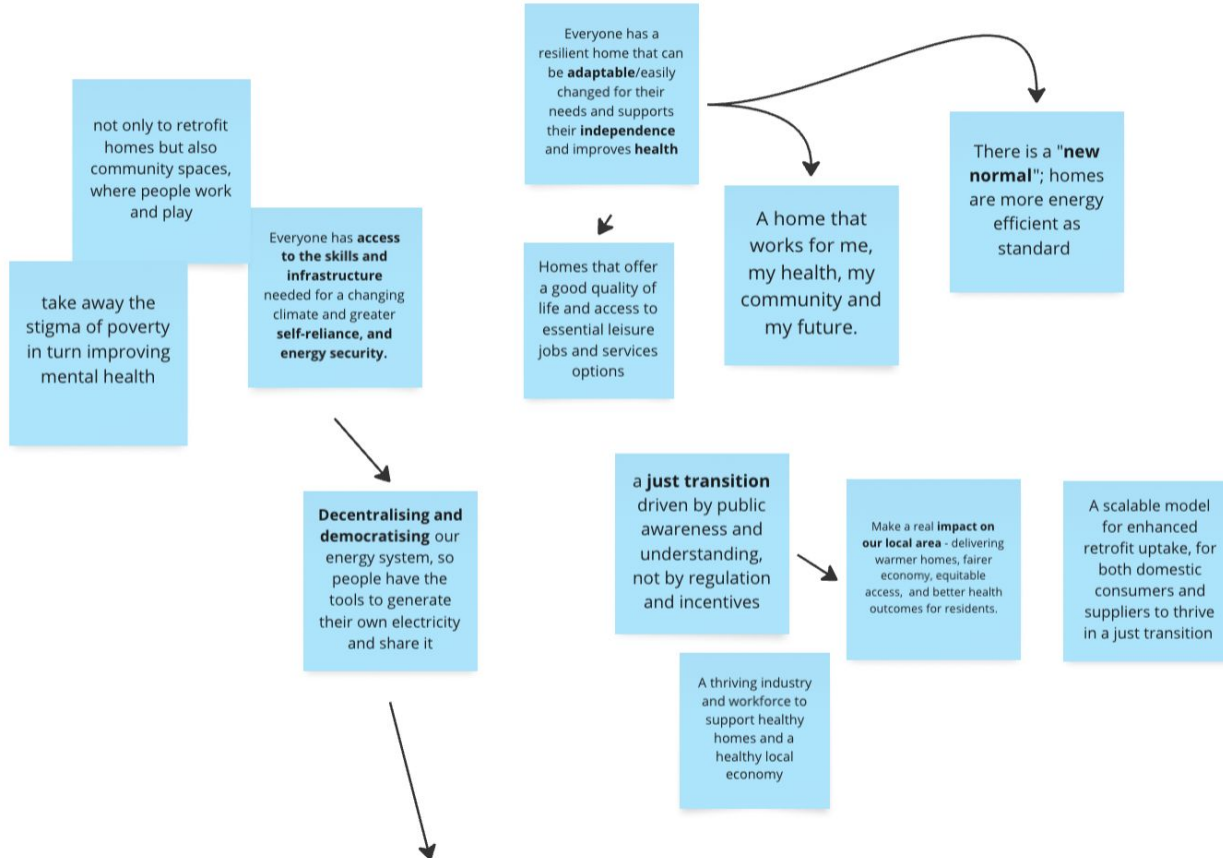
There was a general consensus that the vision was on the right lines, however, it was noted that further refinements were required.

A small group convened to review the suggested amendments and revise the wording of the Vision and Mission statements. An illustration of how the working group ended up with the original statement, along with the revised versions, can be found on the following 6 slides.

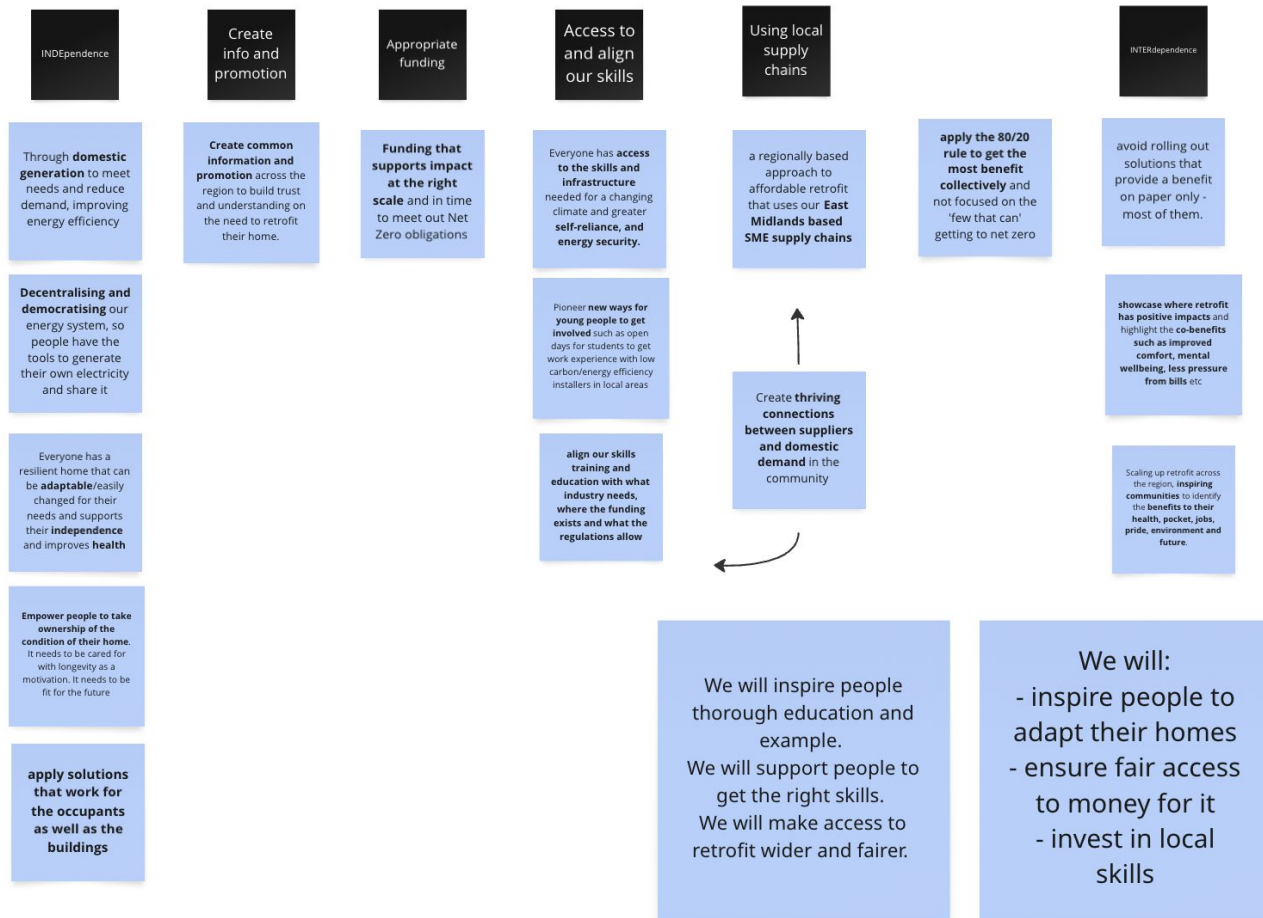
As a starting point for devising our vision statement, the working group used the below headings to start to formulate the statement, and then added corresponding ideas



We then began to refine this further, into vision statements



Mission



Adopting our Vision and Mission statements

Revised Vision:

"A just and fair future in which we're all living in healthy, energy-efficiency homes within sustainable communities."

Proposed Mission:

"We will bring simplicity, affordability and a joined-up approach to improving our homes and boosting our low-carbon economy."

Adopting our Vision and Mission statements

Participants were asked to vote on whether to adopt the revised Vision statement. 62% agreed with the statements, 36% were “broadly happy with it”, and 2% couldn’t support it.

Suggested amendments included:

- Just and fair sounds overlap technical and might confuse some people - amend to regardless of income
- I feel that sustainable communities is too general and moves the vision away from retrofit. I get the link to SDGoals but that should be an underlying principle not the retrofit vision
- Something around skills development and capacity to deliver the retrofit required would add to it
- Quality I believe needs to be part of the vision
- Could we add future proof before homes This would cover the impacts of climate change such as overheating
- Climate resilient Safe Quality
- What is a sustainable community? I preferred the sustainable regional economy in the Vision and put communities in the Mission
- I think there is a core ‘low carbon’ element missing in this vision. Low carbon should be the future, not just the ‘mission’ / method we have of getting there
- I would replace Sustainable with Thriving communities. Potentially more meaningful for residents & supply chain alike
- Sustainable regional economy was better
- Add in climate resilient after healthy and energy efficient
- I think that it sounds too prescriptive, and not dynamic.. lots of words not too much vision

The comments will be reviewed by the project team and the Vision and Mission will be finalised before Workshop 3.

Adopting our Vision and Mission statements

Participants were asked to vote on whether to adopt the revised Mission statement. 67% agreed with the statements and 33% were “broadly happy with it”.

Suggested amendments included:

- Good jobs, instead of boosting economy. Living well within limits, as opposed to promoting economic growth
- It's all about acceleration but there's no mention of speed or time
- Include partnership working and collaboration
- Mission needs to reflect quality of design and installation Could be trust design and installation
- Earlier iteration felt better - loss of consistency feels like it's removing the 'trust' element that has come out as so important
- The goal of simplicity is laudable but in such a complex environment is this realistically achievable.
- Use collaborate instead of 'joined up'. And boosting our communities (not economy- that should be in the Vision)
- Is the mission really to boost the low carbon economy? This might be a bi-product, but I'm not sure it's part of the mission
- Simplicity from what perspective? The retrofit landscape, variability, applicability to different types of housing is complex, cannot be avoided
- To improve the quality of homes
- Please add in quality
- We will bring feels quite nice but not action oriented
- I think it could mention an acceleration, or a need to move fast

The statement will now be reviewed by the project team before Workshop 3, and any amendments made.

Retrofit in Action: Learning from current activity in the East Midlands

East Midlands retrofit activity and learning

This section of the workshop focused on sharing insights from past and ongoing retrofit projects across the East Midlands to build a shared understanding of the current landscape and inspire future actions. A panel of five speakers presented their experiences:

- Rosie Cunningham from Nottingham County Council - Public Health
- David Arkle from Amber Valley Borough Council
- Pete Burgess-Allen from Marches Energy Agency and Miranda Cumberbatch from Nottingham Energy Partnership
- Emma Lower from Lendology

Each presentation covered:

- The scope of the project
- Progress achieved
- Metrics of success
- Challenges faced
- Lessons learned
- Considerations for scaling or repeating such initiatives

Summaries of the presentations can be found on the next 2 slides.

East Midlands retrofit activity and learning

Nottingham County Council - Public Health

Rosie from Nottingham County Council's Public Health team discussed the importance of addressing wider determinants of health, emphasising that only 10% of health and wellbeing is linked to access to healthcare, while environmental factors play a significant role. She highlighted how cold homes and poor housing exacerbate physical and mental health issues, and how retrofitting homes can be a key solution. Benefits of retrofitting include reduced winter deaths, fewer respiratory issues, improved mental health, better school/work outcomes, and reduced healthcare use. Rosie stressed that retrofitting not only improves physical health but also tackles socio-economic inequalities, and that targeted engagement with affected communities and health partners is essential to maximise impact.

Amber Valley Borough Council

David highlighted Amber Valley Borough Council's (AVBC) collaborative and inclusive approach to retrofit delivery, underpinned by principles of partnership, trust, and equity. Unlike many councils, AVBC extended support to all eligible households, not just council stock, focusing efforts on small, well-defined areas to maximise impact. By working closely with contractor Westville, social housing providers, and community champions, they ensured alignment and built trust, offering EWI and loft insulation to over 90% of homes in targeted areas. The scheme was resident-focused, with strong local engagement, flexible funding mechanisms, and careful project oversight without micromanagement. Despite challenges like subcontractor delays and electrical upgrades, the initiative demonstrated how a thoughtful, area-based model can deliver meaningful outcomes, winning awards and benefiting both residents and stakeholders.

East Midlands retrofit activity and learning

The Heat Hub

Pete from Marches Energy Agency and Miranda from Nottingham Energy Partnership presented their Heat Hub programme, one of 36 projects funded by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) in partnership with the Midlands Net Zero Hub. The programme, focusing on "hard-to-treat homes" with poor energy efficiency, aims to provide free, in-person, expert energy advice to homeowners in the D2N2 region. With a focus on homes in conservation areas and those with an EPC rating of D-G, the programme includes tailored home energy plans, workshops, and events to improve thermal efficiency. Despite challenges such as myths about costs, a lack of local installers, and limited grants, the programme helps homeowners understand and implement energy-saving measures, ultimately fostering a sense of community and improving perceptions of retrofit.

Lendology

Emma from Lendology shared about how the company provides tailored financial assessments to help homeowners fund essential repairs, energy efficiency upgrades, and renewable energy measures. Since 2005, Lendology has lent over £25 million, offering a fixed interest rate for all borrowers, regardless of individual circumstances. Emma noted that customers can contact Lendology directly for an assessment, and the loans received are designed to spread the cost of necessary home improvements while ensuring a fair and transparent process for homeowners. Emma further noted that Lendology's Green Loan Scheme for Suffolk County Council, part of their broader work, only lost £36,000 of council funds, a very small amount compared to other schemes, due to the transparent use of council money.

Developing the retrofit strategy

Principles

In this session, we started to look at what principles should guide the retrofit strategy and help to decide the priorities. Two key themes emerged, which encapsulated the principles shared:

We care about people, their easy access to retrofit, and the outcomes for them.

- Customer / people-focussed / agency
- Accessibility / Making it easy and inclusive / Clarity
- Integrity, ethics, care (Doing the right thing for the homeowner)
- Homes that support healthy lives for longer
- Quality / trustworthiness / competence
- Knowledge-sharing / education

We care about how we create and understand value, commitment over time, and being both pragmatic and action-oriented.

- Collaboration / Alignment / Everyone doing their bit
- Future proofed / Long term approach
- Commitment / Follow through
- Pragmatic idealism / Action oriented / Bravery and risk taking
- Good value (Social value / Best value of public funds / Holistic sense of value / Full carbon lifecycle / Economically self-sustaining)

These will now be refined and developed as guiding principles for the Local Retrofit Strategy.

Retrofit System Game

To begin exploring goals and actions for the Local Retrofit Strategy, participants engaged in a simulation game inspired by the game [Systemic](#) by Policy Lab.

In the activity, each participant assumed a specific role (see diagram) with defined actions, guided by instructions and game materials at their table.

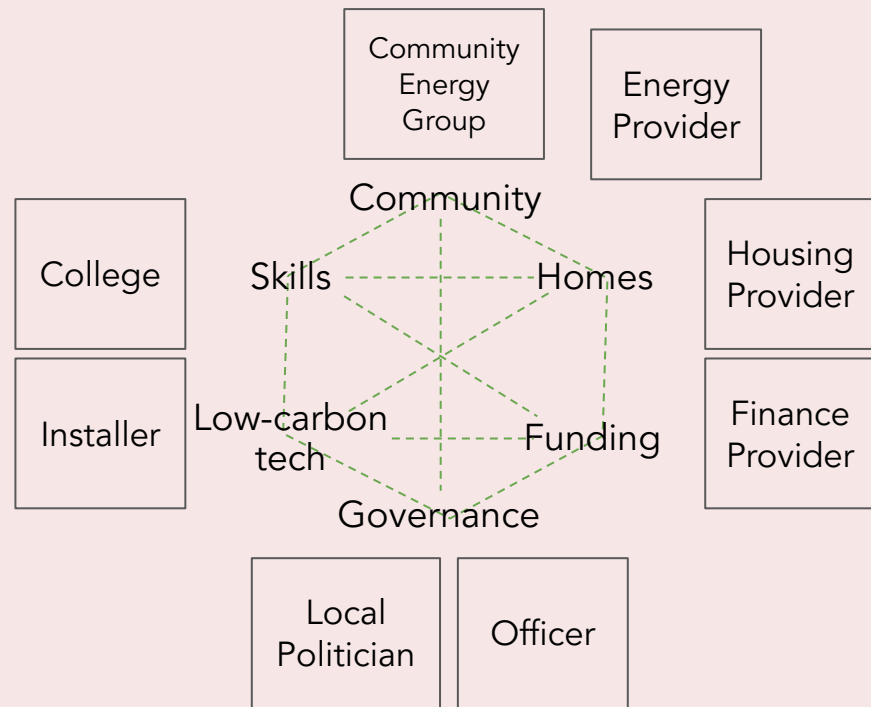
- Round 1: Participants worked individually
- Round 2: Participants worked collaboratively

After each round, the group debriefed to reflect on their experiences. The workshop concluded with participants stepping out of their roles to discuss how the insights could be applied to the East Midlands.

The workshop game aimed to create an engaging and collaborative setting for participants to:

- Simulate teamwork in a dynamic environment
- Explore actionable ideas relevant to the East Midlands
- Test different approaches to change
- Identify key priorities
- Foster experimentation and creativity in problem-solving

Summaries of responses to reflective questions (during and after the game) are provided on the following slides.



Retrofit System Game - Round 1

Accomplishments	What could have gone differently	Lessons learnt
• Gone straight to solar - 'gateway drug' • Some duplication • Pinks ran out first • On the way - baseline foundation • If this were real, some level of stuff would have been accomplished but probably not with any end goal reached • Spent everything, didn't achieve a collaborative mission • Collectively no big picture success story	• 'What have we actually done?' • We didn't know what others were going to do • Cards played because of token value while enough available - not really in the 'right' order • They are discrete initiatives - thinking of own needs • Energy provider was only one not able to go • If they'd known what other actions they had, they might have taken different risks • Would have been nice to have the resources to help people • Influenced what was available - would have chosen different actions if other people hadn't spent resource	• Reminiscent of funding - little bits of money • Which tokens did we want to use up first • Collaboration e.g. getting installers to work with housing providers, to inform residents • As energy provider, no solid capital gain • Money and tech ran out first • Played most resources first - dependant on order (everyone plays selfishly) • Need a common goal and some level of synergy • The order is important • Community and information actions felt like they were for someone else to do • Somethings are missed - some people could have got funding to spend • Connection between leftover actions

Retrofit System Game - Round 2

Accomplishments	What could have gone differently	Prioritisation of resources	Lessons learnt
• A lot more! • More thought-out sequencing • Harder to agree, particularly order • Managed to achieve some sort of system • A great plan! Good feeling around the table • All know what's going on - pooling resources • Cash left over	• Some more coordination of sequencing • Couldn't see all action options - relied on that player to give best option • Debate about how much planning you do upfront • Could still be improved on with a shared vision and mission • Could be better with a coordination body, who knows everyone • There could have been a one stop shop, but we don't want to ignore what there already is in place • Lots tied up with social prescribing • Community energy group could do more on DIY	• Used relationships first, with lower cost resources to plan, lobby, engage and access finance. Then the supporting finance, training/supply chain after that • Tried to go in chronological order of setting up the system with good foundations • Everything flowed quickly after • Tried to cluster similar/complementary actions • How much do you plan up front vs something that you can do quickly by yourself • Some actions didn't get chosen not at delivery stage • We should have looked at all cards up front • It was still played with self interest • Buying things together - eliminating duplication	• More actions played • Less tokens left • EMCCA mayor could play key role • Have to have everyone round the table • Temptation to get on with things that are under your control • The first round reflects reality but it's not efficient - money doesn't go to where it's needed most - who can't always articulate their needs • Need for coordinating body - Combined Authority? • Consensus takes longer • Do we need a token for time and capacity? • Able to still be selfish while working collaboratively • Easiest to talk to the person next to/closest to you and to know what they're got and want to achieve • Lots of information still around

Action planning for the LARA Strategy

The purpose of the game follow-up was to encourage participants to gain new perspectives on the retrofit system, consider the benefits of collaboration, and reflect on how systemic change occurs and consider practical steps to drive such change in their context.

In the game follow-up, participants were asked to step out of their roles and discuss priorities for collaborative action and to apply the insights gained from the game to real-world challenges, specifically identifying priorities for collaborative action on retrofitting in East Midlands.

Summaries of the post-game reflections can be found on the next three slides.

What are your priorities for collaborative action?

Priority action	Why this is a priority
Open source our insights and communicate data etc	We are all moving blind - need to pull in the same direction
Establish a coordinating body for the whole sector - knowing the 'who'	We don't know what others are doing - Mayoral clout, EMCCA
Ensure political buy-in and full support from local authorities	Makes decision making easier, and projects are more successful with LA support
Generate public awareness of retrofit and schemes and funding	Progress at scale isn't possible without awareness and understanding
Understand the local landscape - archetypes, installers, skills etc	Need to know where to focus efforts in gaps/worst areas
Local authority and housing providers to deliver at larger scale	Gives good base to work on and expand able to pay market
Coordinating distribution of resources between orgs - include finance, political capital, install capacity etc	
Regional retrofit strategy, governance/facilitation around co-ordination of delivery	
Use data that we've already got to understand baseline and prioritise actions against strategy	
Awareness campaign about how to maintain homes	

Priority action	Why this is a priority
Assessing available funding options, grants, lendology, green bonds etc (EMCCA funding, can Local Authority money be pooled)	
Work out area-based approach and prioritise which areas first	
Procurement to deliver skills outcomes - pilot	
Local skills training and working on retention - funding diverted into this	Massive skills shortage
Sealing up the things that are working e.g. the Heat Hub	Builds on proven and developed initiatives, supports local activity
Educating on why retrofit is good for people to do	People won't do it if they don't know why
Costed plan of action (including map of skills)	Don't want to create something you can't afford
Low cost loan scheme within a one stop shop (on the basis that the need is being met in low cost)	Nobody else offering money in able to pay to persuade to do retrofit
Targetted training for different dwelling types (incl. Funded apprenticeships)	There is currently not enough funding to ensure this can take place
Communication and collaboration between stakeholders (e.g. FE)	Employers are not able to take on FE students
Community engagement and consultation	Without buy-in building relationships and trust, it will never happen

What are your priorities for collaborative action?

After the discussion about priorities for collaborative action, we moved onto identifying the top 3 actions per group to share and identifying the subsequent themes that emerged from these. A visual illustration of what was pulled out and the clusters that started to form, can be found on the following 2 slide.

Costed plan of action - incl map of skills and gaps

Establish what is already happening in D2N2

Targeted training and funded apprenticeships

Prioritising areas for area-based approach

Procurement to deliver skills outcomes - pilot

Provide confidence to supply chain through visibility of pipeline

Develop a signposting and collaboration network

Educating the public on why retrofit is good for people to do

Community engagement and consultation

Awareness campaign about how to maintain homes

Assessing available funding options, grants, lendology, options for local authority funding

Open source insights and data (repository/ dashboard)

Journey support service for property owners online and in person

Low cost loan scheme within one-stop-shop

Use data to understand baseline and prioritise actions against strategy

Understand the local landscape - archetypes, skills, local installers etc

Improve resident engagement on funded schemes

Demonstration of technologies: support community groups to run green open homes

Build on existing best practice

Generate public awareness of retrofit and schemes and funding options

Coordinating distribution of resources between orgs - include finance, political capital, install capacity etc

Local Authority and housing providers to deliver at larger scale

Template for PAS assessment for residents that is easy to understand and can be used for able-to-pay market especially

Sealing up the things that are working e.g. the Heat Hub

Increase
independant
overview - not
commercial or
political

Deciding on who
will co-ordinate
delivery of strategy
= governance -
clarify role of
EMCCA

Establish a owner
for coordinating
the region -
EMCCA with
MNZH

Ensure political
buy-in and full
support from
local authorities

Communication
and collaboration
between
stakeholders e.g
FE and employers

Focus
group/board
to get real
action started

Regional
brand -
governance

Coordinated
field trial -
evaluation
and feedback
on success

Promote social
prescribing model -
coordinate with
health - NHS/public
health

Who does this?
Identify key
players/ structure/
timeframes/
distribution/
accountability

What is the work we need to do next?

Next Steps

Workshop 3: Developing the Retrofit Strategy for the East Midlands

19th May 2025

- Review SWOT
- Finalise strategic objectives
- Develop pathways and priority actions
- Design governance and accountability mechanisms
- Celebrate progress

What is the work needed before Workshop 3?

Participants:

- Share and seek support for the vision and emerging priorities
- Develop governance recommendations
- Continue to develop strategic goals and action proposals
- Review baseline and develop SWOT

Core team:

- Reach out to missing stakeholders and engage key political stakeholders
- Finalise Vision, Mission and Principles
- Support Working Groups and SWOT
- Begin to write local retrofit strategy
- Prepare for Workshop 3

Retrofit Strategy Working Groups

- Meet online
- 1-2 meetings before May 14th
- 1-2 hours per meeting
- Convened and supported by core team
- All welcome!
- A more specific brief for each of the groups will be circulated prior to the meeting(s)
- Do you want to join a working group? If so, please contact Andrew at MCSF:
andrew.rice@mcsfoundation.org.uk

Working Groups are:

- Trust, Tech and Skills
- Strategic goals and actions
- Governance and accountability

You can still complete the end of workshop feedback survey if you haven't already!

LARA East Midlands: Workshop 2
Survey



Thank you for coming!