



Community Housing
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Intro

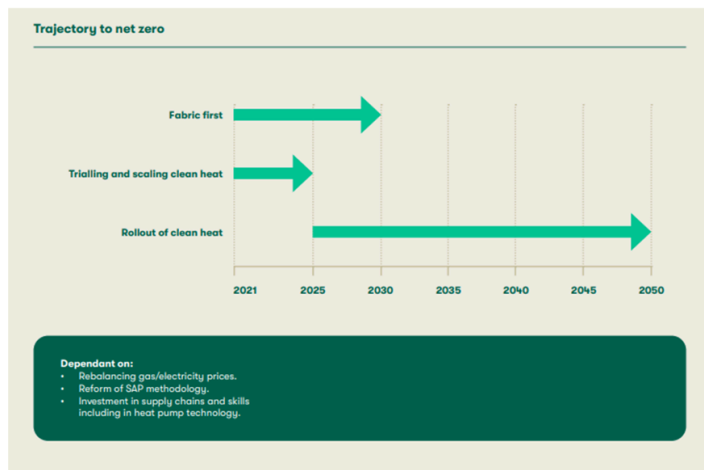
Paradigm Housing manages 16,500 properties just north of London and builds circa 500 new properties per year. They operate on a 30-year horizon matching the tenure of their funding from the bond market, where investors take a deep interest in net zero plans.

Opportunity

Paradigm Housing completed the Wrights Lane Retrofit Project for a block of 30 flats in 2024 over a 6 month period. The purpose was to implement new upgrading measures in order to raise their energy performance certificate (EPC) score above Band-C (Band A represents the best energy performance, like a 7 star NatHERS rating, with Band-C being decent). The key objectives were:

- Reduce energy consumption and carbon footprint of the building.
- Improve thermal comfort and living conditions for residents.
- Achieve energy bill cost savings for residents.
- Ensure compliance with relevant regulations and standards.
- Minimise disruptions to residents during the retrofit process.

Solution



Retrofitting older buildings is crucial to reaching net-zero energy use. The "Fabric First" retrofitting strategy is a game-changer. This strategy improves a building's exterior, insulation, and ventilation to substantially cut energy use and reach net-zero emissions. The first stage of the whole process is to identify the right properties for any retrofit measure updates by using existing property data.

The project followed the 6 Retrofit [PAS 2035 STEPS](#) (the British Standard for retrofitting dwellings). Importantly, they had a dedicated retrofit advisor who met the tenants face-to-face to discuss the property, its comfort, energy efficiency, and safety and security.

The final solution included: Installation of solar PV, air source heat pumps, new doors, ventilation systems, and window repair. The project was funded by their own budget and through the [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#) scheme (UK federal government energy efficiency scheme to address fuel poverty).



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Lessons learnt

The lessons learned highlight the importance of thorough planning, proactive management, stakeholder engagement, and adherence to quality standards and regulations.

Project start:

- Data is very important when starting on any retrofit project. With poor data, the starting point could be wrong and affect the whole project.
- Consider the long-term sustainability and impact of retrofit measures beyond immediate cost savings.
- Engage key stakeholders early and make sure they are engaged.
- Prioritise resident satisfaction and address concerns promptly to maintain positive community relations.

During the project:

- Thoroughly vet contractors and suppliers for experience and reliability. The importance of selecting reliable contractors and suppliers cannot be overstated.
- Implement robust quality assurance processes to ensure the effectiveness and safety of installed systems.

Post-project:

- The importance of recognising that the installation is just the start and other parts of the business will need to feel part of the project as they will be responsible post-installation for the next 15 to 20 years.
- The handover process is important. Not everyone will remember the details. Maintain comprehensive project documentation and facilitate knowledge transfer for future maintenance and operations.

Impact

Wrights Lane project has now achieved a "B" EPC rating.

From an initial energy efficiency review and discussion with customers, tenants have been reporting warm houses, plentiful hot water, and up to 70% lower energy bills¹.

Continual monitoring and evaluation will be essential to:

- sustain the benefits of the retrofit measures over the long term
- maximise the return on investment; and
- contribute to the overall resilience and sustainability of the building infrastructure.

¹ <https://www.paradigmhousing.co.uk/showing-off-retrofit-success-to-bucks-council/>