

The Existing Homes Alliance 2010 Manifesto

A National Retrofit Programme

- Housing should, by 2020, achieve a 42% carbon reduction against 1990 levels. The 7m homes to benefit from “whole house retrofit” packages by that date (according to existing government ambitions) will need to reach an average of at least 60% improvement. The first step to achieving these substantial carbon reductions will be through energy efficiency improvements, with large scale upgrades to home insulation and windows and replacement of old inefficient heating systems.
- By 2030 a whole house retrofit package should have been applied to all homes. By 2050 we should see near-zero carbon emissions from housing, to be achieved through energy efficiency, extensive use of renewable energy measures on homes and new community scale energy infrastructure.
- To hit these targets, government needs to make a long term commitment to a National Retrofit Programme for existing homes, to be rolled out across the UK. This programme will be a central part of our transition to a low carbon economy: it will provide certainty for businesses investing in low carbon measures for homes and save billions in energy bills – particularly benefiting the most vulnerable people in society.
- The National Retrofit Programme needs a strong central administration and effective local targeting. It should also allow for innovation and entrepreneurship among companies to bring together finance in new ways to deliver neighbourhood refurbishment programmes.

Standards

- A key part of the timetable for the National Retrofit Programme will be a 2010 to 2030 and 2050 roadmap setting out minimum regulatory standards and voluntary aspirational standards for energy performance of homes. A linked set of fiscal incentives should encourage action to meet the standards. These standards and incentives need to have an impact on homes in all tenures: social rented, private rented and owner occupied, and may need to be varied between tenures.
- Energy Performance Certificates can be a valuable tool in setting the minimum and aspirational standards, and ensuring that these standards are reflected in house price. However, to achieve this we believe the design and content of EPCs could be improved and the government must ensure the certificates have much greater prominence - particularly when homes are being marketed.

Financing

- Our estimates of the costs for treating individual homes with a whole house retrofit package range from £12,000 to £40,000 depending on the type of home treated and the package of measures used.
- Most of the funding for long term retrofit will come from home owners, who will benefit from savings on their – or their tenants’ - energy bills. There is a need for a range of financing mechanisms that can enable home owners to cover the upfront capital costs. The range of mechanisms available will need to include personal green mortgages (whereby mortgage rates are linked to the energy standard of the home), loans and Pay As You Save type schemes (whereby a standing charge is placed on a property for a set period of time, regardless of owner). Financing mechanisms need to be underpinned by government action to reduce the cost of capital and government support for renewable energy measures will be needed in the form of feed in tariff and renewable heat incentive.
- The fuel poor, who have most need of seeing savings on their energy bills, but least ability to access finance, will need to be targeted with grant funding. An extended obligation on energy suppliers to support carbon and energy saving measures in homes is vital.

Raising awareness and making action easy

- A key part of the National Retrofit Programme must be investment in support and advice programmes to engage citizens to:
- Understand the benefits of retrofitting energy saving measures in their homes
- Use less energy in homes – reducing appliance and hot water use
- Choose higher EPC rated homes when they buy or rent a home
- One way to raise awareness is to enable people to visit retrofit exemplar homes, where they can see the potential and the benefits of low-carbon improvements, and be inspired to do something similar. And once householders are inspired, they need support and advice they can trust as they begin taking action: to help them access the right financial support and then to find the right company to install measures.

Jobs and skills

- The low carbon retrofitting of homes will create jobs - helping to rebuild the UK economy in a sustainable way. We should aim to see £6bn invested in retrofit each year, and recent research suggests that, in England alone, such a level of investment will generate over 100,000 direct and indirect new jobs each year to 2020. Creating these jobs will require investment by industry in training and supply chains. We believe industry is ready to make that investment - provided the right long term policy signals are put in place by government for a National Retrofit Programme.

Members of the Existing Homes Alliance Steering Committee

AECB, Association for the Conservation of Energy, Camco, Chartered Institute of Housing, Federation of Master Builders, Passivhaus Buildings, Places for People, PRP Architects, Sustainable Energy Academy, UK Green Building Council, WWF



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Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes, Energy Saving Trust, Homes and Communities Agency, Sustainable Development Commission

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www.existinghomesalliance.org.uk