

Funding the Future

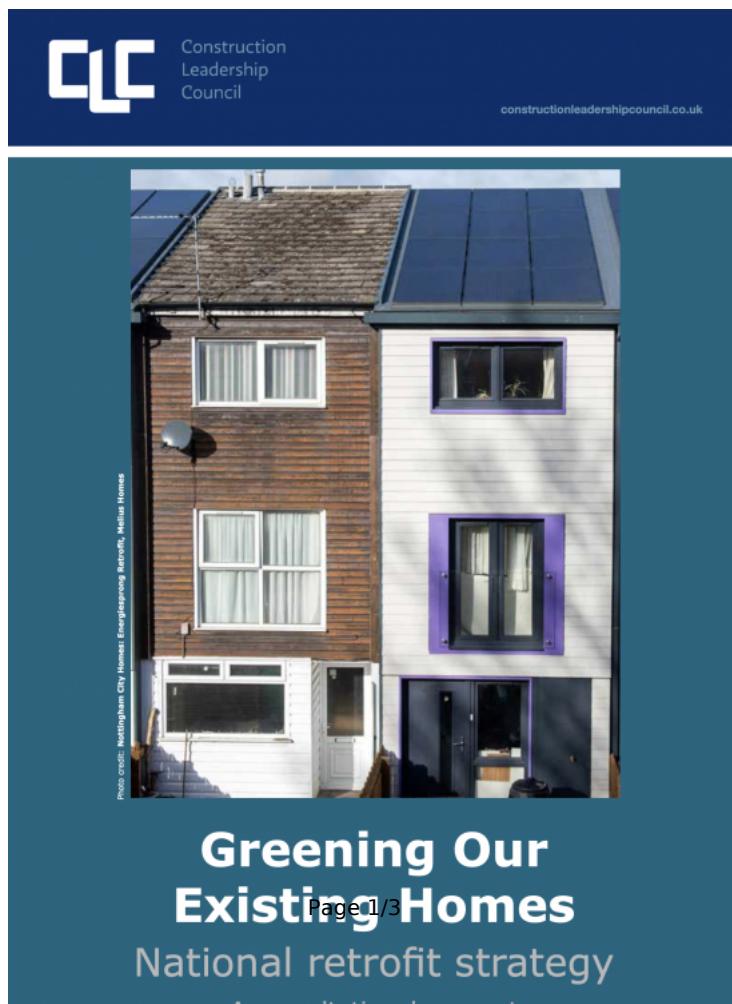
The Green New Deal for the UK's housing stock co...

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Colin Hines and I [have been calling for a retrofit](#) green insulation and generation programme for the 28 million houses in the UK for longer than I wish to recall. It has always been a key component in what we have seen to be the Green New Deal.

Our argument has always been a perfectly straightforward one. It is that 35% of emissions come from households, so we need to eliminate them. This would, we argue, create new jobs in every constituency of the UK when literally nothing else can do so, and those jobs and the hope that comes with them are desperately needed. And, we have suggested, [the funding for this is readily available, not just from quantitative easing, but from the savings glut that QE has already created in the UK.](#)

It was good, therefore, to note that a whole host of organisations in the UK building and housing sector have come out in support of this idea [in a new report](#):



CLC Construction Leadership Council constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk

Photo credit: Nottingham City Homes: Energidegroup Betsys, Melise Homes

Greening Our Existing Homes

National retrofit strategy

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As this report says:

Proposal

This paper sets out the case for the UK Government, working in partnership with industry, finance, and other community based bodies to introduce a national retrofit strategy to make our existing homes greener and more energy and water efficient. Without a long-term plan, the UK cannot meet its targets of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The industry will be able to deliver this strategy, but there are critical elements that can only be delivered by the Government. While industry can mobilise the majority of the capital that is needed, the Government must also invest to instill confidence in the sector.

And it adds:

Why is retrofit needed?

Our homes use 35% of all the energy in the UK and emit 20% of the carbon dioxide emissions. If the UK Government is to deliver its targets of a 78% emissions reduction by 2035, and net zero by 2050, household emissions need to be addressed. Water use in the home accounts for almost ten-times more greenhouse gas emissions than the entire operations of the UK water industry. Heating water accounts for 17% of home energy use. The UK has some 28 million homes, the vast majority of which need improving by having retrofit work carried out. A national retrofit strategy will also improve the UK's energy security as well as resilience of water suppliers.

Retrofit should be carried out alongside all other improvements, like loft conversions or new kitchens. When typical home improvement works are undertaken, these represent opportunities to trigger measures to help us along the path to net zero.

It goes on to say:

In partnership with industry, the Government is asked to invest and create a long term policy framework which will meet its statutory carbon targets and trigger wider confidence to unlock private investment from property owners and financial institutions.

The industry needs around 500,000 new professionals and trades to tackle this challenge. We also need to upskill our existing workforce. The Government has supported the development of new training standards for Retrofit Coordinator and Retrofit Installer, which can form the basis of the programme in terms of training and quality assurance. Clarity on standards, process requirements and audit will provide a firm foundation for both training and market transformation.

The strategy has been developed with the private market in mind. However, its principles can and must be extended to the social sector as well. We are aware of significant work being undertaken by local authorities and the housing association sector to improve the energy efficiency of their housing stock. We are also aware of the progress being made in this historic building sector, and that insight can be brought from their findings.

We hope that 2021, the year when the UK hosts the United Nations Climate Change Conference, will be the ideal moment for all these bodies to unite behind the principle of a national retrofit strategy, and take the bold action needed to reduce carbon emissions before it is too late.

We could not agree more. Indeed, it's good to have so many of the claims that we have made confirmed.

Now all we need is delivery. And that comes down to answering the question 'how are

you going to pay for it?' Colin and I [remain the only people with a comprehensive plan to do that.](#)

Now is literally the time to put the UK's savings to work. Will the government rise to the challenge? It needs to do so.