# Riverside's £72 million retrofit accelerates UK social housing’s journey to net zero



Liverpool-based housing group Riverside has launched an ambitious £72 million retrofit programme to enhance the energy efficiency of more than 3,000 homes across multiple locations, including Liverpool, Halton, Carlisle, the Langley estate in Middleton, and Enfield in London. The initiative is co-funded by a £36 million grant from the UK Government’s Warm Homes Social Housing Fund (Wave 3), which Riverside is matching with its own investment. The comprehensive three-year project aims to raise the homes’ Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings to Band C, delivering crucial improvements such as cavity and external wall insulation, solar panel installations, roof alterations, new double glazing, and doors. Work is scheduled to begin in early October, with resident open days planned to provide information and foster community engagement.

This latest phase builds on Riverside's earlier retrofit success under the Wave 2.1 programme, which upgraded over 1,000 homes across the same regions with £26 million in funding. WPS, part of The Wates Group and the contractor for the southern regions in the previous programme, has been appointed once again to manage delivery, drawing on its extensive experience in retrofitting social housing. The partnership highlights Riverside’s commitment to sustainability and its role as a Strategic Partner of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. Ian Gregg, Riverside’s Chief Property Officer, emphasised the transformative potential of the programme, stating it will help thousands of households become warmer, more comfortable, and more affordable to live in by reducing energy bills and tackling fuel poverty.

The retrofit programme aligns with broader government ambitions detailed in the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund initiative, which has allocated £1.29 billion to raise the energy efficiency of social housing across England by 2030. The fund prioritises upgrading properties currently below EPC Band C to this standard, aiming to address climate change, improve tenant well-being, reduce carbon emissions, and stimulate local green job creation. Such efforts are crucial in combating fuel poverty, which impacts millions of households nationally, by making homes more energy efficient and affordable to heat.

WPS, with a significant portfolio in social housing retrofit, brings considerable expertise to Riverside’s project. The company has been involved in multiple retrofit schemes funded through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF), including a £4.3 million contract retrofitting nearly 200 homes for The Hyde Group and a recent agreement to upgrade 410 homes for Orbit housing. These projects often incorporate a range of measures from insulation to renewable energy installations like solar photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps, supporting government targets for all social housing to reach EPC Band C by 2030. WPS’s Executive Managing Director, David Morgan, highlighted the dual benefits of retrofitting, noting that warmer homes that cost less to heat contribute to better health and economic outcomes for residents, while also advancing the journey towards net-zero carbon emissions.

The retrofit programme additionally fosters local employment opportunities and community engagement, key aspects of Riverside’s mission to combine sustainability with social impact. The collaborative approach, including resident engagement days, ensures transparency and tenant involvement, making the initiative as much about improving quality of life as about environmental responsibility. Such extensive retrofit schemes represent a growing trend in the UK social housing sector, where partnerships between housing providers and specialist contractors like WPS are central to meeting both national climate goals and social equity demands.

Overall, the Riverside and WPS initiative exemplifies how substantial government investment, matched by committed housing providers, can generate wide-ranging benefits — from lowering fuel bills and improving living conditions to supporting the green economy and driving national decarbonisation targets. With retrofit works scheduled from late 2024 to 2027, this programme forms a pivotal part of the UK’s strategy to ensure social housing stock is fit for a sustainable future.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/northwest/news/2159416-housing-group-embarks-on-72m-retrofit-programme-to-improve-tenant-conditions), [[2]](https://www.riverside.org.uk/over-3000-homes-to-benefit-from-energy-efficiency-upgrades/), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/warm-homes-social-housing-fund-wave-3)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/northwest/news/2159416-housing-group-embarks-on-72m-retrofit-programme-to-improve-tenant-conditions), [[2]](https://www.riverside.org.uk/over-3000-homes-to-benefit-from-energy-efficiency-upgrades/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/warm-homes-social-housing-fund-wave-3)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.wates.co.uk/news/housing-maintenance/residential/growing-our-net-zero-portfolio/), [[6]](https://www.wates.co.uk/news/housing-maintenance/residential/weve-been-appointed-to-retrofit-over-400-orbit-homes/), [[7]](https://www.wates.co.uk/wates-retrofit/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/northwest/news/2159416-housing-group-embarks-on-72m-retrofit-programme-to-improve-tenant-conditions), [[2]](https://www.riverside.org.uk/over-3000-homes-to-benefit-from-energy-efficiency-upgrades/), [[5]](https://www.wates.co.uk/news/housing-maintenance/culture/our-property-services-division-and-transform-team-up-to-improve-energy-efficiency-in-100-homes-for-vulnerable-residents/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/northwest/news/2159416-housing-group-embarks-on-72m-retrofit-programme-to-improve-tenant-conditions), [[2]](https://www.riverside.org.uk/over-3000-homes-to-benefit-from-energy-efficiency-upgrades/), [[3]](https://www.wates.co.uk/news/housing-maintenance/residential/growing-our-net-zero-portfolio/), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/warm-homes-social-housing-fund-wave-3), [[7]](https://www.wates.co.uk/wates-retrofit/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/northwest/news/2159416-housing-group-embarks-on-72m-retrofit-programme-to-improve-tenant-conditions> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.riverside.org.uk/over-3000-homes-to-benefit-from-energy-efficiency-upgrades/> - Riverside, a Liverpool-based housing group, has secured £36 million from the government's Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (Wave 3) and is matching this with its own funding, totalling £72 million. This initiative aims to enhance the energy efficiency of over 3,000 homes across Liverpool, Halton, Carlisle, Langley estate in Middleton, and Enfield in London. The programme includes measures such as cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation, double glazing, and new doors, with the goal of achieving Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C ratings. Work is set to commence in April 2025 and is expected to be completed over three years. This effort builds upon Riverside's previous retrofit work under Wave 2.1, which improved over 1,000 homes in Carlisle, Halton, Liverpool, and London. The partnership with WPS, part of The Wates Group, is expected to tackle fuel poverty, reduce carbon emissions, and create local employment opportunities. Riverside's commitment to sustainability is further demonstrated by its role as a Strategic Partner of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. Ian Gregg, Chief Property Officer at Riverside, expressed enthusiasm about the transformative impact of this programme, aiming to make thousands of properties warmer, more comfortable, and affordable to live in, thereby lowering energy bills and reducing fuel poverty. David Morgan, Executive Managing Director at WPS, highlighted the broader benefits of the initiative, noting that warmer homes that are cheaper to heat lead to better economic and health outcomes for residents, while also reducing the environmental impact of housing.
3. <https://www.wates.co.uk/news/housing-maintenance/residential/growing-our-net-zero-portfolio/> - Wates has been awarded a £4.3 million contract under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1 to retrofit 198 properties for The Hyde Group. The project includes loft and cavity wall insulation, solar photovoltaic panels, LED lighting, air source heat pumps, and mechanical extract ventilation. This contract is part of Wates' broader portfolio, which includes over £100 million in SHDF Wave 2.1 contracts with 17 social landlords, contributing to the company's extensive experience in social housing retrofit, with 42 projects valued collectively at nearly £200 million. The initiative aligns with government targets for all social housing to achieve Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings of C by 2030. David Morgan, Executive Managing Director of Wates Property Services, emphasized the importance of supporting social landlords in their journey towards net-zero targets, highlighting the role of retrofit works in improving home efficiency and combating fuel poverty.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/warm-homes-social-housing-fund-wave-3> - The UK government has allocated £1.29 billion for the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (Wave 3) as part of the Autumn Budget. This funding aims to upgrade a significant portion of social housing stock currently below Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C to that standard. The fund supports the installation of energy performance measures in social homes in England, with objectives to deliver warm, energy-efficient homes, reduce carbon emissions, tackle fuel poverty, support green jobs, develop the retrofit sector, and improve the comfort, health, and well-being of social housing tenants. The application window for this funding closed on 25 November 2024. Eligible social housing landlords, including local authorities, combined authorities, registered providers of social housing, and registered charities that own social housing, were invited to apply. The funding is intended to be delivered from 2025 until 2028.
5. <https://www.wates.co.uk/news/housing-maintenance/culture/our-property-services-division-and-transform-team-up-to-improve-energy-efficiency-in-100-homes-for-vulnerable-residents/> - Wates' Property Services division has partnered with Transform Housing & Support to improve energy efficiency in 100 properties for vulnerable residents. The project, backed by over £1 million in government funding from the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3, aims to bring properties up to a C rating on the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) scale. The three-year programme, known as Transform’s ‘Warm Homes Project: Affordable Warmth through Sustainable Solutions,’ will introduce measures such as external and cavity wall insulation, as well as low-carbon heating solutions like air source heat pumps and solar panels. Richard Hamer, Transform’s Director of Asset Management, Decarbonisation and Growth, emphasized the dual benefits of the scheme in reducing fuel poverty and tackling the climate emergency. David Morgan, Executive Managing Director for WPS, highlighted the importance of engaging with residents throughout the process to ensure they understand the work being done and the benefits it will bring.
6. <https://www.wates.co.uk/news/housing-maintenance/residential/weve-been-appointed-to-retrofit-over-400-orbit-homes/> - Wates has been appointed by Orbit, a UK not-for-profit housing group, to undertake a retrofit programme for 410 homes over two years. The project includes energy efficiency improvements to 160 homes through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund’s (SHDF) Wave 2.1, with the remaining 250 properties funded by Orbit and the Government’s ECO4 programme. The PAS2035-compliant contract comprises a range of building fabric improvements, including external, internal, cavity wall, and loft insulation, as well as traditional capital works such as roof, window, and door replacements. The partnership also explores digital and renewable solutions, including smart thermostats, ventilation upgrades, air and ground source heat pumps, night storage heating systems, and photovoltaic panels. Completion is expected by September 2025, with an option to extend the contract for a further four years. The work forms part of Orbit’s long-term Decarbonisation Retrofit strategy, working towards the Government’s target for all social housing to reach Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings of C by 2030.
7. <https://www.wates.co.uk/wates-retrofit/> - Wates has developed a market-leading end-to-end PAS 2035 compliant retrofit solution to support clients towards their zero carbon targets. The company has secured £110 million of SHDF funding in partnership with customers and has completed £200 million of SHDF funded works to date, with 8,700 properties currently undergoing or having received retrofit services. Wates guides customers through every step of their retrofit journey, from initial planning to final installation and monitoring. The company's ethos is to work collaboratively, supporting customers with applications for funding, helping them to understand and adhere to compliance, selecting the most suitable energy efficiency measures, and supporting residents through essential works. Wates' work in social housing retrofit aims to tackle fuel poverty and carbon emissions, with the goal of improving home efficiency and helping to combat fuel poverty.