

Welsh Government's Warm Homes Arbed Domestic Retrofit



This case study contains details of the Carbon Trust's work on domestic retrofit with the Welsh Government and Ceredigion County Council.

It provides an illustrative example for GMCA on the following topics:

- Providing targeted technical advice to ensure best practice approaches for designing and implementing area-based housing retrofit programmes
- Aggregation of domestic retrofit projects
- Accessing funding sources and support with grant applications
- Comprehensive understanding of key policy levers
- Engagement with key stakeholders

The Welsh Government's Warm Homes Arbed (WHA) is the flagship scheme for improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty across Wales. The scheme funds housing retrofit works in deprived communities.

The Carbon Trust was appointed by the Welsh Government in 2015 to provide technical support to local authorities, contractors and suppliers during the delivery of the energy efficiency retrofit programme throughout Wales. This support service was designed to improve the overall quality of the £81.6 million WHA programme and maximise the environmental, social and economic benefits of area based housing retrofit schemes across Wales.

The Carbon Trust has provided support to the programme and its beneficiaries on a variety of activities, ranging from commercial support in the development of funding bids, through to in-depth technical design support and facilitation of best practice and lessons learned stakeholder events.

Key activities included:

- Reviewing and supporting the Welsh's Government's technical criteria for the WHA funding application process;
- Supporting and reviewing 17 out of 22 local authority applications for WHA funding ahead of submission to the Welsh Government, focussing on data accuracy, suitability of the interventions proposed (external wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, etc..) and establishing programme costs and savings, as well as providing support on structuring and developing bids such that they had the greatest chance of success;

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- Advising local authorities on best practice approaches for designing and implementing area-based housing retrofit programmes, by:
 - Reviewing programmes of works, method statements, risk assessments, etc.;
 - Analysing technical construction details and specifications to minimise thermal bridging and subsequent induced damp and mould risks;
 - Assessing compliance with legislation such as UK Building Regulations and Energy Company Obligation (ECO);
 - Conducting site visits to inspect the suitability and quality of retrofit installations – including thermographic imaging surveys, and temperature and moisture meter analysis;
 - Providing guidance on general project and contract management;
 - Resident engagement during and post-installation; and
- Facilitating ‘lesson learned’ workshops with local authorities to inform future major Welsh Government housing retrofit programmes.

Ceredigion County Council

Ceredigion County Council, in West Wales, was one of the first local authorities to contact the Carbon Trust for technical advice and support under the recent Warm Homes Arbed scheme, the Welsh Government’s major housing retrofit programme aimed at tackling fuel poverty.

The council had previously worked with the Carbon Trust through the Welsh Government’s Resource Efficient Wales programme, which supports organisations across Wales with tailored guidance on saving energy and reducing water use or waste.

Graeme Lane, Ceredigion County Council’s energy efficiency project manager initially wanted support with preparing a detailed proposal for the retrofit works. After receiving this support from the Carbon Trust, the proposal was then submitted to the Welsh Government. Ceredigion was amongst the highest scoring local authorities who were successfully granted funding to proceed with their housing retrofit programmes.

The first step of implementing the project was for the council to identify which areas within the county would be eligible for the energy efficiency upgrade works. The 150 homes identified represented a range of different property types and tenancies, including homes that required solid wall and hard-to-treat cavity wall insulation. These included a mix of owner-occupied, private rented and social housing.

Of the 150 homes identified, nearly 70 percent of the eligible households took up the offer of having external wall insulation installed. As the detailed designs for the insulation were developed, the Carbon Trust was on hand to review the specifications and plans for delivery. A key part of this review process was identifying potential thermal bridges – routes for heat loss through the building fabric – and understanding how to mitigate their impact.

During the course of the retrofit works, the Carbon Trust conducted several site visits and advisory meetings with the council, residents, local social landlords, the contractors and the cavity insulation guarantee agency. This regular interaction with the project team helped to ensure that the technical specifications were being implemented correctly on site.

“Having the Carbon Trust as an independent reference through the Warm Homes Arbed application process was invaluable. We utilised their expertise during delivery of works associated with technical challenges and queries which provided us with confidence and improved outcomes.” Graeme Lane, Ceredigion County Council
