



CASE STUDY | IMPROVING HOMES

REDEFINING RETROFIT AT THE HIGH

Addressing retrofit in blocks of flats is an integral part of the path to net zero. More than half of all Londoners live in a block of flats two storeys tall or greater. Yet these blocks are massively underserved when it comes to retrofit planning and delivery. Most retrofit services are geared towards individual homes – often because retrofitting flats is complicated. Residents and landlords face an array of technical, legal, economic and governance challenges, with residents often under-represented in decision-making. Meanwhile, the sector is focused on technical aspects of the work, leaving communities and residents to fight through the jargon.

A new roadmap for retrofit

Our project at The High in South London set out to establish a new pathway for retrofit for blocks of flats. It offered both residents and landlords at the site – made up of five blocks and 174 units – the tools to plan a retrofit journey appropriate for their community.

Project in brief



Offers potential annual carbon savings of 1.25 tonnes per flat



The proposed model builds social capital through community engagement



Including the community in early-phase decision making reduced risk at later stages of delivery



Tailored interventions address both health issues and high energy bills



Repowering London is now validating and systematising the service so that it can be rolled out more widely

Repowering London worked with stakeholders and partners to test a new co-designed service model. We supported residents and landlords to feed their needs and priorities into early-phase retrofit planning. We then engaged residents with the retrofit process and helped the landlords understand what technical interventions were feasible and appropriate for their building. This resulted in the successful delivery of an early-stage roadmap for improving the energy efficiency of the building, reducing its carbon emissions, and making it more comfortable for residents.

From co-design to delivery

The journey involved working with several key partners. First, service design experts TPXImpact facilitated a participatory process with Repowering London, residents and sector experts to co-develop a resident-centric service offering for early-phase retrofit planning. This included creating prototype engagement materials and mapping out a customer journey.

The service offering was then put into practice alongside KIN and KLH Sustainability. We sent



out surveys and held community drop-in events to engage directly with residents. Technical data from retrofit assessments, site visits and requests for information were then fed into energy modelling. The data collected was used to produce personalised Smart Plans for individual residents. A technical feasibility report was also created for the Board Members of The High. Altogether, this process facilitated a clear retrofit roadmap for residents, landlords and management.

Community-focused retrofit

Repowering London believes the energy transition should be accessible to everyone, including a clear pathway to a retrofit future. This exploratory project at The High showed that it was both possible and beneficial to put people at the heart of the process.

Across the project, Repowering London worked in partnership with chronically ill or disabled residents, those living on a low income or with other common barriers to accessing energy. This allowed us to incorporate a variety of perspectives, needs and priorities into the design of our retrofit proposition. Our aim was to engage as many residents as possible with this complex topic, foster a sense of community and deliver a good level of engagement with the early-phase retrofit planning process.

In total, 15% of residents participated in a retrofit energy survey and 10% of households attended the community events. A programme of face-to-face engagement, including phone-based support, helped to eliminate jargon. As a result, the steps and benefits were clear to participants.



“Retrofit is not a common topic – it needed a high-touch approach, and that’s what they gave it ...”

– Participating Board Member

