**Briefing note on the Strategic Domestic Retrofit Group**

The Strategic Domestic Retrofit Group is a new sub-group of Kent Housing Group [(see link to KHG webpages](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/subgroups/strategic-domestic-retrofit-group/)). It also reports to the Kent and Medway Environment Group, the strategic level group which oversees Kent and Medway’s 2050 Net Zero target.

The purpose of the group is to deliver actions under Priority 5 (Building Retrofit Programme) of the [Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy](https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/environmental-policies/kent-and-medway-energy-and-low-emissions-strategy). In particular, the group is focused on:

* Action 5.3 – Develop a comprehensive **Kent and Medway Domestic Retrofit Action Plan** (excluding social housing) that identifies the actions and financial mechanisms for all income levels, to reduce emissions (from electricity, heat and water) from all property types, with evidence-led targets and costed actions where possible.
* Action 5.4 – Secure funding and implement projects identified in the Domestic Retrofit Action Plan (excluding social housing).

Governance

The group reports in to both the Kent and Medway Environment Group and Kent Housing Group. The Chair is Peter Dosad from Dartford, with Brian Horton currently acting as vice chair. The group has taken up this work following the disbandment of KMSEP (the Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership).

Both the Private Sector Housing sub-group and Asset Management sub-group of Kent Housing Group are represented at the Strategic Domestic Retrofit Group. This is due to the significant cross over and opportunity for joint learning (e.g. many of the techniques and approaches for decarbonising social homes will be equally applicable to the owner occupied and private rented sector).

The Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership, which focuses specifically on fuel poverty will now report into this group to ensure strategic oversight and direction.

*Figure 1: Outline governance structure for the Strategic Domestic Retrofit Group*



Context for group

Kent local authorities undertake varying degrees of retrofit activity. Some local authorities are active in growing the installer market, others have developed advice services or data manipulation/modelling and targeting. The Energy Hub is also active in supporting the South East and works closely with BEIS. Most of the retrofitting activity is facilitated around the fuel poverty sector and is aimed at spending Green Homes Grants Local Authority (LAD) and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) funding. There is no countywide officer resource to access much of the available funding that could support other activities.

There is some activity supporting households in fuel poverty though the delivery of national initiatives but the strategic approach has paused for a refresh of the Kent Fuel Poverty Strategy. There is a distinct gap in facilitating retrofit across the private sector “able to pay” households. This patchwork approach means there is no consistency or certainty for those working in, or looking to train in retrofit skills in Kent and Medway.

Emissions from domestic housing account for 31% of all carbon emissions across Kent and Medway – it will be impossible to meet climate change targets without action on domestic retrofit. 80% of the buildings we will have in 2050 already exist, we can’t focus simply on new build.

Activity to date

The group has met twice so far in 2022, with one more meeting planned in December. There are 6 meetings planned for 2023. The frequency of meetings will then be reassessed.

Meetings so far have discussed barriers to retrofit, these include:

* No detailed Kent wide data
* Resident understanding/desire for retrofit
* No central coordination or centre of excellence, leading to duplication
* Installer network lacking capacity and in some areas, skills shortage
* Supply chain delays
* Skills development
* Transience of government funding and no finance options for able to pay
* Grid capacity, UKPN delays
* Planning
* Complex procurement processes and officers without procurement expertise often end up leading procurements in this area

Next steps

* Data across the whole of Kent & Medway – audit which districts have which data and can we fund parity software (or equivalent) across Kent?
* Map the current customer journey for retrofit and fuel poverty (what is out there and what gaps are there?
* Set out what the opportunities are for first steps and the longer-term ambition, e.g. a centre of excellence, able to pay project development, financing, shared skills, community energy initiatives, financing.
* Demonstrate the potential for in-county investment, even very simply you can multiply up the number of tradespeople needed and demonstarate the loss of investment if we don’t grow this sector, along with the costs of people spending more than they need to on fuel bills and costs of people falling behind on rents.
* Map analysis of skills set across different local authorities.
* Pull this together into a proposition of what is needed, take onwards to be championed with KMEG.

Membership

Chair – Peter Dosad – Dartford Borough Council

Interim vice-chair – Brian Horton

Neil Diddams – West Kent Housing Association (representative of KHG asset management subgroup)

Julian Watts/Sue Oliver – (representative of KHG private sector housing subgroup)

Richard Hopkins – CIEH private sector housing group

Amanda Martin – Dover District Council (KEEP representative)

Sandra Woodfall – Dartford Borough Council (KEEP representative)

Eve Lockton-Goddard – Thanet District Council

Bethany Pepper – Kent County Council (Energy and Low Emissions Strategy retrofit lead)

Lizzy Johnson – Canterbury City Council (representative of Kent Chief Planning officers group)

Dipna Pattni – Greater South East Net Zero Hub

Tbc – Kent County Council (representative for economic development – skills and training)

Helen Miller – Kent Housing Group

Further reading

[https://ukgbc.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/05144353/Retrofit-Playbook.pdf](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fukgbc.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F02%2F05144353%2FRetrofit-Playbook.pdf&data=05%7C01%7CBethany.Pepper%40kent.gov.uk%7C395b3590dc74444fa3e108daa5569de2%7C3253a20dc7354bfea8b73e6ab37f5f90%7C0%7C0%7C638004089718877197%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=l823%2FvXDb%2B%2FJB5TR0fpc%2FIY4%2BtR07u9CzSzfw0Y2dVs%3D&reserved=0)

There are also Retrofit playbooks for each sector, each one focussing on the activities that need to occur to make a step change:

Private rented sector

[https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/improving-private-rented-sector-guide-councils](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.local.gov.uk%2Fpublications%2Fimproving-private-rented-sector-guide-councils&data=05%7C01%7CBethany.Pepper%40kent.gov.uk%7C395b3590dc74444fa3e108daa5569de2%7C3253a20dc7354bfea8b73e6ab37f5f90%7C0%7C0%7C638004089718877197%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=fyQ5E0bndj7kZkE%2F1J%2Ffm%2BvZPOGGpBESR6t9rmlSiF4%3D&reserved=0)

Great guide below:

[https://www.ukgbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Local-Authority-Retrofit-Toolkit.pdf](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ukgbc.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2020%2F11%2FLocal-Authority-Retrofit-Toolkit.pdf&data=05%7C01%7CBethany.Pepper%40kent.gov.uk%7C395b3590dc74444fa3e108daa5569de2%7C3253a20dc7354bfea8b73e6ab37f5f90%7C0%7C0%7C638004089719033425%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Rm2wiI9ESe044POhGcP0DOnNdxoEnYh%2B2iCJxaIzXx0%3D&reserved=0)

[https://www.instituteforsustainability.co.uk/retrofitguides.html](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.instituteforsustainability.co.uk%2Fretrofitguides.html&data=05%7C01%7CBethany.Pepper%40kent.gov.uk%7C395b3590dc74444fa3e108daa5569de2%7C3253a20dc7354bfea8b73e6ab37f5f90%7C0%7C0%7C638004089719033425%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=zLlBExX2Ats8GJ4rtK5cguDPkL6M4w51bIgpiPA%2FoDo%3D&reserved=0)

[https://www.leti.uk/retrofit](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.leti.uk%2Fretrofit&data=05%7C01%7CBethany.Pepper%40kent.gov.uk%7C395b3590dc74444fa3e108daa5569de2%7C3253a20dc7354bfea8b73e6ab37f5f90%7C0%7C0%7C638004089719033425%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=aQmDz72T5KlFP9TbWxm9iQH3wUkDG5Qgagzaf34rBJU%3D&reserved=0)