RISE | Retrofit information, support & expertise

Project Management Checklist for Retrofit: Pre-design approval

Toolkit

June 2025

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Summary

Retrofit programmes delivered under the Warm Homes funding streams can be complex. Typically, these programmes are delivering works at scale, across multiple property types and experience regular changes. Each retrofit project will need to demonstrate it has followed the PAS 2035 standard and the programme overall will need to adhere to the requirements outlined by the Department of Energy and Net Zero (the funding body).

Navigating all the work streams which go into a successful retrofit programme can be overwhelming. This toolkit sets out a step-by-step checklist of tasks which are designed to ensure you are well-prepared to deliver your retrofit programme to a high standard.

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit has been designed to help Social Housing Providers, Local Authorities and other stakeholders with the delivery of Warm Homes retrofit projects. Those responsible for planning and delivery of the retrofit project will get the most value from the toolkit.

When should you this toolkit?

This toolkit has been designed to take grant recipients from bid approval through to being fully prepped and ready for delivery. Therefore, it is recommended to begin working through the checklist as soon as you have received bid approval. However, this toolkit can be used at any time throughout the preparation phase.

How to use the toolkit?

Detailed below are the broad requirements for delivering a successful Warm Homes retrofit project. We have consolidated the key aspects of the planning and delivery into a checklist of tasks. By working through this checklist prior to beginning installs it will ensure you are as prepared as possible. While it has been written to take applications from bid approval through to start of delivery, we recommend that you dip into the relevant sections of this toolkit to support you with the specific requirements needed.

Introduction

When getting started to deliver a retrofit project or programme, there are a number of planning requirements to be aware of and consider from the outset, especially when bidding for, or receiving government funding. This toolkit provides a comprehensive overview of all factors to consider pre-design approval.

What are the requirements you'll need to follow?

PAS 2035 compliance requirements

For retrofits to be eligible for grant funding they will need to demonstrate that they have adhered to the PAS 2035 standard. This will include:

- Appointing each role required under PAS 2035
- Completion of an assessment for every dwelling receiving works
- Continuously registering and mitigating risks to the program
- Evidencing approval for your retrofit designs from a suitably qualified designer
- Installation of your measure collections through suitably qualified installers with no deviation from the approved design
- Accurate reporting on your program spend, delivery and completions

Warm Homes fund requirements

When your bid for grant funding was approved you will have received a document outlining in detail the planning and delivery requirements of your programme. This will come in the form of your memorandum of understanding (MoU) for Warm Homes Local Grant (LG) recipients and your grant funding agreement (GFA) for Warm Homes Social Housing Fund (SHF) recipients.

While there are differences between the MoU and GFA, both documents outline the same broad requirements:

- Resource gathering and team assembly
- A contractor procurement plan
- A list of eligible properties and a delivery forecast
- A governance plan including risk, fraud and financing management
- A reporting framework for internal and external stakeholders
- Delivery assurance

We recommend that you read through the scheme requirements specific to your project in detail and make sure you and your delivery team understand the requirements well.

Project Management Checklist

Action	Responsible	Page	Complete
To begin, have you thought about how your initial <u>data</u> could be more accurate?			
Collect & aggregate data	Sustainability/assets data analyst	7	
Assess data & improve data quality	Sustainability/assets data analyst	7	
While improving your data quality, think about assembling your programme team.			
Fill position of project manager	Senior leadership	7	
Fill the roles necessary under PAS 2035	Programme manager (PM)	7	
Complete a skills audit and bridge the gaps	PM	7	
Consolidating your consortium	Consortium lead, senior leadership	8	
Have a think about how to structure your property list and formulate a programme delivery plan.			
Initial assessment (SHF only)	PM	8	
Set objectives and targets	PM	8	
Archetyping	Sustainability/assets data analyst	9	
Project execution plan	PM	9	
Early and tailored <u>engagement</u> is an important part of delivering a successful retrofit program. How you can effectively engage stakeholders throughout your programme?			
Identify all key stakeholders	Communications manager (CM)	9	
Produce a comms and engagement plan	CM, neighbourhood teams, resident liaison officer	9	
Raise of awareness of the plan	CM, project manager, exec teams	9	
Launch the plan	CM, project manager, exec team	9	
To avoid bottlenecks, it is important to open a line of communication with your supply chain, or prospective suppliers, as soon as you have clarity on your needs.			
Define specification, outcomes and programme timeline	Procurement team & PM	10	
Define your procurement strategy	Procurement team & PM	10	

Engage with your supply chain early	CM	11	
Retrofit programmes can be fast paced and dynamic. Have you thought about how to implement a consistent and robust governance framework?			
Risk & fraud management plan	PM, finance teams	11	
Risk register	Contractors, project officers, PM & finance, exec	11	
Fraud register	Quality assurance, contractors, finance	12	
The Warm Homes grant funded schemes have reporting requirements. Have you considered how you can streamline this process and ensure accuracy?			
Reporting framework	Consortium lead or PM	12	
Contractor reporting templates	PM, contractors, project officers	12	
Internal reporting to senior leadership	PM, senior leadership team	12	
Reporting within a consortium	Consortium lead	12	

Data quality

As you develop your retrofit plans, it's important to gather enough information on individual homes to understand their build type, existing components, and, ideally occupant behaviours and usage patterns. Under SHF this data may be easier to locate via internal data sources such as stock condition surveys.

In the case of LG, be sure to focus on homes which fall into the eligibility criteria of the scheme which we will look at in more detail later in this checklist. Good sources of data include registered EPCs, SAP data, thermal imaging surveys and retrofit assessments. Where there are gaps in data you can clone properties of a similar archetype.

As this early stage we recommend following 4 key steps:

1. Collect your data
2. Aggregate your data
3. Self-assess your data
4. Improve data quality

For a deep dive into each stage please see our toolkit on gathering quality data for best practise principles.

Programme team assembly

It's important to fill the role of retrofit programme manager as early as possible. They may be drawn from an existing role within your organisation such as asset manager or buildings manager. This role must be internal to your organisation.

At this stage, you should complete a skills audit; map out the roles you will need to complete the project, including those specified under PAS 2035. Consider what other roles you will need for delivery.

Programme Manager Responsibilities
Developing the overarching retrofit scheme and delivery approach
Creation of project execution plans
Development and management of a project programme
Management of the construction contract
Management of overarching project risk
Management of the project financials

Bridging the gaps: Any gaps you identify in your team and/or consortium will need to be bridged. Assess which skills are available in-house and whether you could provide relevant training to bridge the gap. Alternatively, you may decide to recruit for specific roles or outsource the specific tasks to external organisations. For more information, see the quick guide: project team.

Once you have identified the roles with your project team, we would recommend the use of a RACI listing Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed for each task. We recommend watching this masterclass for more details here.

Consolidating your consortium: During the bid process you will have decided whether a consortium is the correct choice. Now it is important to ensure that you have your memorandum of understanding in place with your partners. This should outline clear lines of responsibility, change management, quality management and reporting and dispute resolution. We will see some of these aspects in more detail throughout this checklist. For more details on forming your consortium please review our toolkit on establishing and managing a consortium here.

Programme Delivery Plan

Successfully delivering your retrofit programme at scale will require the coordinated management of multiple projects at once. A thorough programme delivery plan will support your delivery.

Initial assessment: A baseline of the energy performance of the stock included in your bid with a view to finding areas of improvement. We recommend using housing energy analytics software to help you hone down on energy efficiency measures. Please take a look at our toolkit data for retrofit projects with particular reference to appendix 3 for more insights on the software packages available to you.

In the case of LG applications, finding the most suitable areas to target may be challenging. It is important to follow the eligibility criteria (see here for guidance) closely, invest in marketing and promotion opportunities, and engage with key stakeholders. This masterclass here will help you structure this work.

Setting your objectives and targets: Establish a clear set of objectives for your programme. These should be overarching and should consider the scope and intended outcomes of the overall project. For example, the impact you want the project to have on your residents.

Then break these objectives down into specific targets to measure success of your programme against. For example, average reduction in bills per year per resident.

In the case of a consortium, it is important to ensure that your objectives and targets are aligned.

Archetyping: Categorise your property list based on building information such as build date or location, desired outcomes such as cost effectiveness, carbon reduction or reduced disruption to residents, and suggested measure collections.

It is not uncommon to have 20-30 different archetypes and this will allow you to plan your resource and supply chain requirements more effectively and adopt an agile approach to property replacement throughout the programme.

See this toolkit created by the national retrofit hub for more details here

Project execution plan (PEP): A consistent framework with which to manage each project which you should outline early. By using the same structure throughout the programme for each project this will facilitate a 'golden thread' of information, for example ensuring your engagement and reporting frameworks are synced across your various projects.

Typical content might include: project objectives, scope of work, resources, timelines, engagement plan, risk & fraud management.

The PEP should be a live document which is consistently updated as you learn more. For example, once the designs have been approved or the contract signed with your delivery partner, you should update this document accordingly.

Stakeholder Engagement plan

Most of your engagement planning should centre around residents and you should have completed a high-level plan 6 months prior to the start of the programme. We recommend that you follow the 7 stages of our retrofit engagement toolkit which can be viewed here.

As this checklist covers prior to design approvals, we will dive into more detail on the first three aspects of resident engagement. Ideally, this process would start six months prior to the project with launch two to four months prior. It should start within four weeks of signing the GFA or MoU at the latest.

Engagement planning	Raising awareness	Launch
Link your retrofit engagement with your organisation's existing strategies and policies to get buy-in from internal stakeholders.	Present the details of your retrofit plan to your residents, staff and contractors.	Outline the full details of the retrofit project and encourage residents to agree to the programme.
Complete a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify who you will need to engage. In addition to residents, these might include local MPs, businesses and community groups.	Build feedback back into your original plan: • Confirm with residents how they would like to be contacted in future and begin to identify typical concerns or shortfalls in understanding • For your internal staff and contractors, begin to identify gaps in their skillset and offer them training opportunities	Ensure your engagement team are fully mobilised ensuring your retrofit coordinator is onboard and that your staff and contractors are sufficiently trained.
Sketch out your entire engagement action plan, listing all the tailored awareness raising and information sharing activities you plan on completing. Forecast the cost and resources necessary for your engagement plan		Focus efforts on reaching out to residents who you have not yet engaged with. By this stage the goal is to have a complete list of approvals with additional residents engaged in the event of dropouts.

In the case of a consortium, it is important to share your engagement plans and ensure that you have consistent messaging a means for reporting against the success of all communications delivered across the consortium.

Establishing your supply chain

Defining your specification and programme timeline: One of the key drivers behind the PAS 2035 framework is to ensure that works are installed to the correct Pas 2030 standards. For more information about the PAS 2030 certificate requirements please see our Introduction to PAS2030 or review the full PAS2030 standard document here.

At this stage you will also be able to specify:

- Your preliminary programme plan and measures
- Reporting requirements
- Governance frameworks
- Sustainability of supply chain
- Resident engagement

You should therefore agree with your procurement team a set of key performance indicators and service level agreements that you will expect of your supply chain.

Defining your procurement strategy: Once you have defined your requirements, you will need to decide which procurement strategy works best for you. Typically, these fall into two camps or a hybrid of the two:

Amending an existing contract	New Procurement Exercise
It is common for Warmer Homes bid applicants to amend their existing planned maintenance contracts to include retrofit delivery.	If the decision is reached that a new procurement exercise is needed there are several routes which can be taken. We have put together a toolkit here which details the different options and how they might fit your needs.

As of February 2025, the Procurement Act 2023 will apply. We would recommend that you work with your procurement team to consider the implications for any new or existing contracts.

Governance

Risk & Fraud management plans: Your risk and fraud management plans can be generic and applied across all projects. They will follow a similar structure and should cover:

- How will you assess risk or fraud risk?
- Who is responsible for managing fraud and risk?
- When will you review and update the plans?
- How will you decide mitigation and escalation actions?
- Who will deliver mitigation and escalation actions?

It is important that once these questions have been answered, the project and delivery team are aware of the process.

Fraud and risk registers: Your risk and fraud registers are a requirement for the warm homes scheme. Please contact your delivery support manager for templates that will help manage project risk and fraud risk.

Capturing risks effectively: Your fraud and risk registers will span several internal and external stakeholders. It is therefore important to put in place a process by which risks and risks of fraud are captured from all relevant stakeholders by the internal project manager where they can then be reported to the Department.

Reporting framework

For retrofit projects funded through the Warm Homes scheme you will be required to submit an accurate monthly report back to the department. Outlining progress in key deliverables such as total spend or number of homes completed.

Contractor templates: Think about how data is received by the project team from your contractors and in what format. Consider using customisable tools which can produce a standardised template for all your contractors.

By ensuring your report back to the Department is as completed as possible, including the specific measures for each home and listed installer qualifications, this will not only provide confidence to the Department but also ensure you are correctly following the PAS 2035 framework.

Internal reporting to senior leadership and other stakeholders: Though not necessary for the Warm Homes fund, you may also wish to report progress internally. We recommend that you discuss the required level of detail, frequency and formatting of your reporting back to internal stakeholders. You may find it easiest to base this internal report on the monthly report required for Warm Homes funding.

Reporting within a consortium: It is important to outline early how you will capture changes to the project and share information. It is important that any changes to the expected timelines of scope of the project are reported to the consortium lead.

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