Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy 2025 to 2028

Spring 2025

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1. Executive summary

The Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy (the "Strategy") sets out a three year, structured and actionable roadmap for accelerating domestic retrofit in Hertfordshire, ensuring clear priorities, governance, and implementation steps.

In alignment with county wide Net Zero targets, the Strategy sets out to address inefficiencies in Hertfordshire's housing stock. It is a people-led approach to improve the energy efficiency in homes to a high standard through a diverse range of measures. Critically, the Strategy itemises how, by working collaboratively, more can be delivered.

This strategy moves beyond pilot stage to establish a coordinated, structured, long-term delivery framework, establishing good governance and oversight to ensure transparency and effectiveness.

The Hertfordshire approach is summarised through the 'Strategy House' diagram (figure 1) and the underlying goals and actions it illustrates. Figures 2-5 show each of the four goals and their associated actions.

Key strategic priorities

- **Increasing the uptake of appropriate retrofit measures through enhanced advice services and financial mechanisms.**
- **Maximising co-benefits such as local economic growth, health improvements, and environmental resilience.**
- **Strengthening the local supply chain by boosting skills, quality assurance, and contractor capacity.**
- **Ensuring a coordinated, trusted delivery model through strong governance, partnerships, and policy alignment.**

Vision

"Every home is fit for now and for our future"

Outcomes

Health: Improved mental and physical outcomes

Equity: Improvement in people's life outcomes

Affordability: Increased ability to maintain homes at healthy temperatures without financial strain

Energy efficiency: Reduced energy consumption and associated emissions from heating, cooling and powering homes

Productivity: Growth in high-skilled, sustainable jobs and businesses

Resilience: Homes fit for the future climate and environment

Goal 1

Increase uptake and demand for successful delivery of retrofit advice and measures

1.1: Increase access to trusted advice and guidance

1.2: Increase retrofit investment in private housing (both owner occupied and privately rented)

1.3: Increase investment in social housing

Goal 2

Realise the co-benefits of retrofit for Hertfordshire

2.1: Realise local economic benefits

2.2: Realise health and wellbeing benefits

2.3: Realise environmental benefits

Goal 3

Increase supply chain capacity and quality in Hertfordshire through improved standards and demand

3.1: Increase retrofit capacity and quality

3.2: Increase demand for training and ensure adequate capacity/quality

Goal 4

Create a confident, trusted retrofit environment

4.1: Develop suitable retrofit strategy governance and delivery arrangements

4.2: Increase collaboration, data-sharing and learning

4.3: Ensure local policies are supportive

Mission

Collaborating in Hertfordshire to retrofit homes in need, so that we enhance our environment and climate resilience, address fuel poverty, improve health and support local jobs.

Principles

Work together | Evidence led | Sustainably minded | Ambitious but realistic

Figure 1: Strategy house, with the roof representing the vision and outcomes, supported by goals and resting on mission and shared principles.

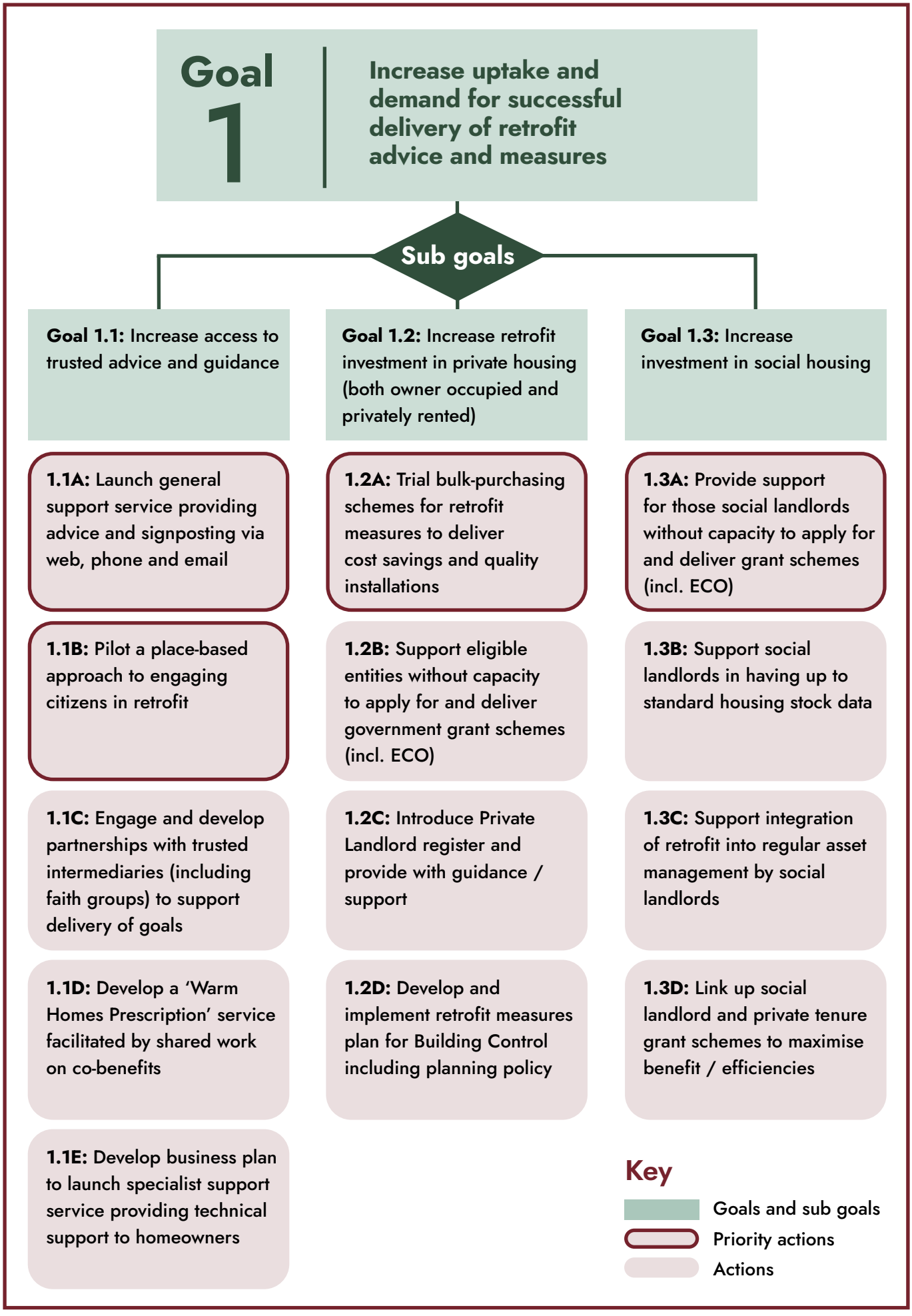


Figure 2: Goal 1

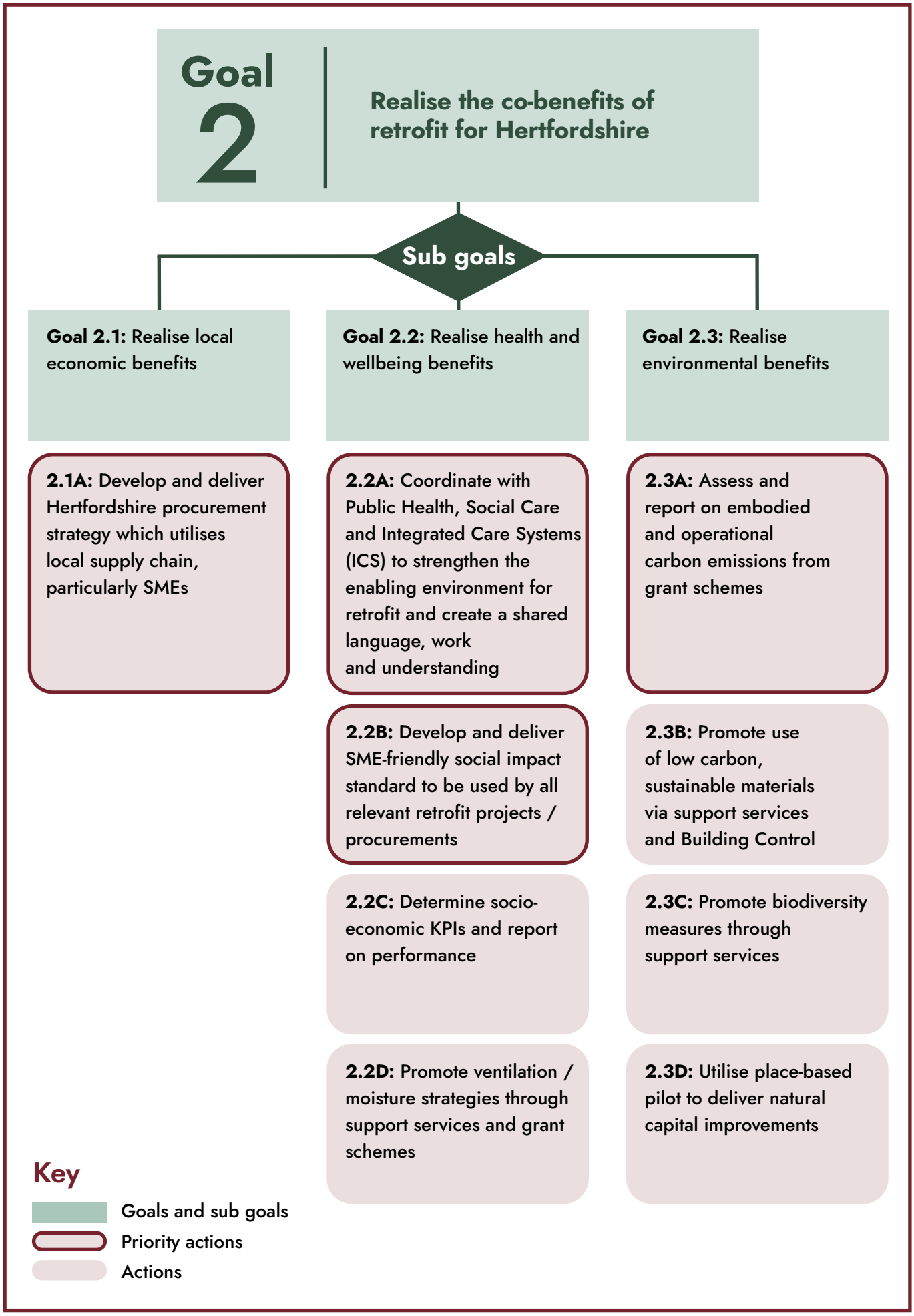


Figure 3: Goal 2

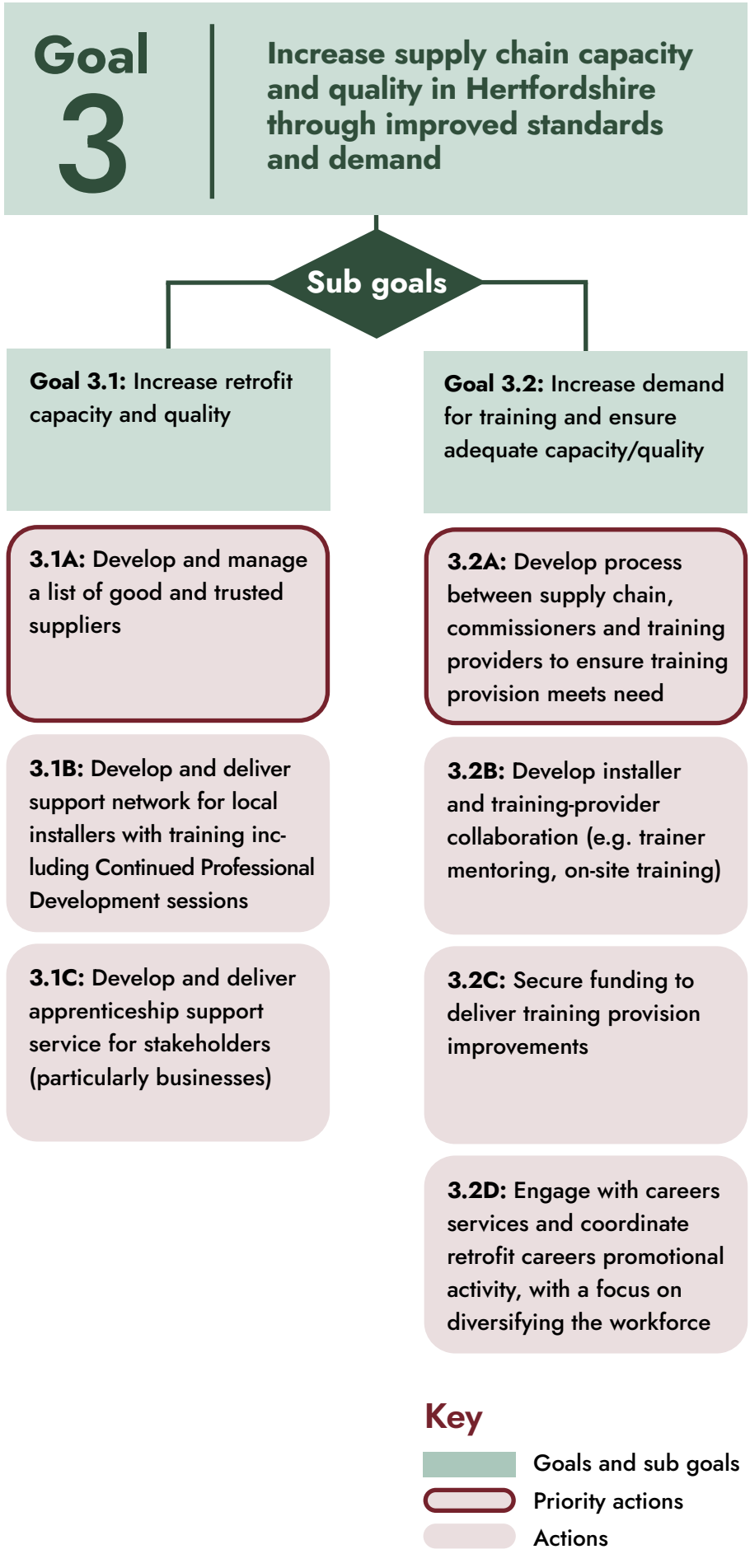


Figure 4: Goal 3

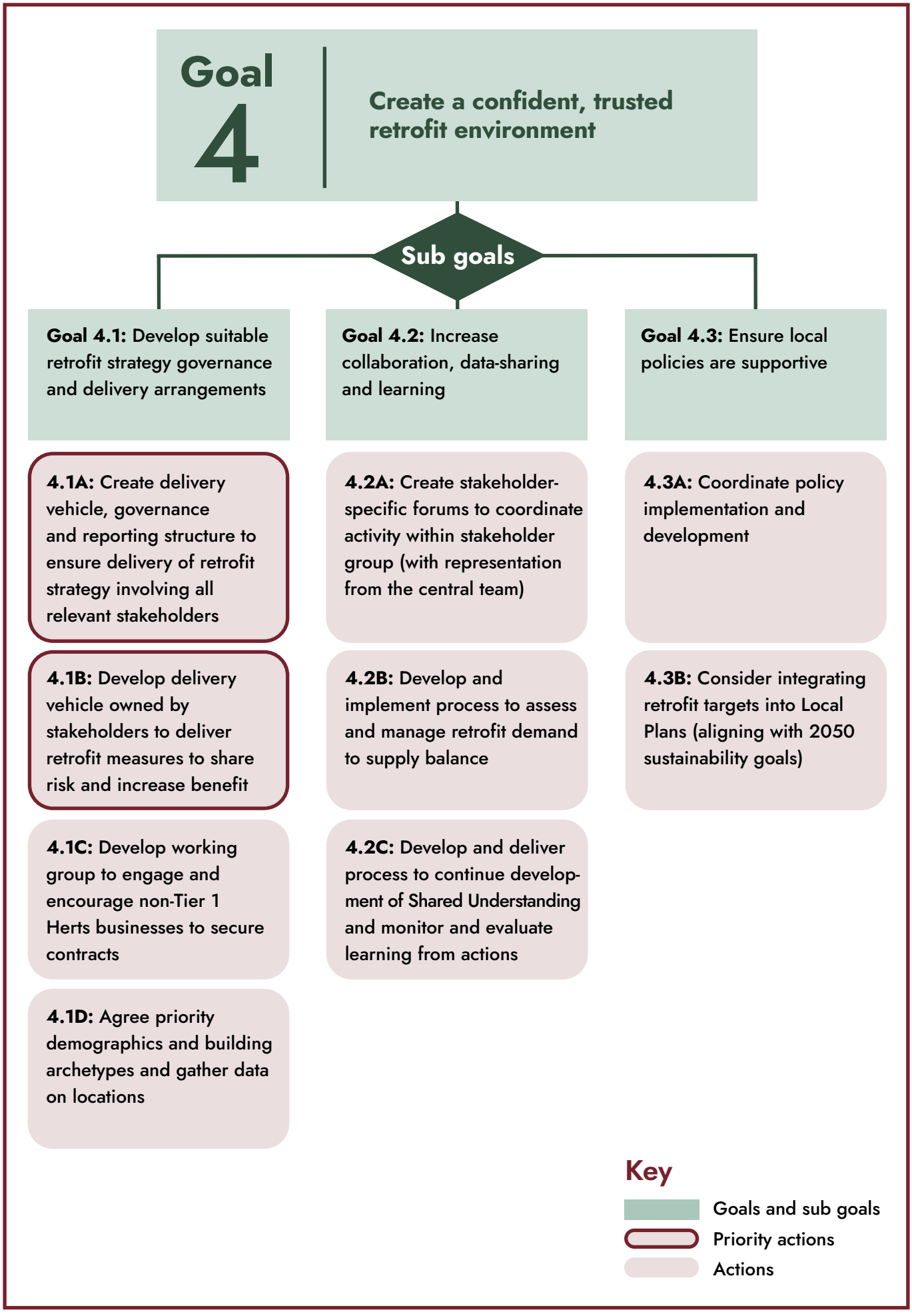


Figure 5: Goal 4

2. Definitions

The terms used in this document are defined as follows:

Central Team: The operational team responsible for the operational progress of the Retrofit Strategy for Hertfordshire. In its early stages this team will include the Manager and the Support Officer (HCCSP), Programmes Director (MCS Foundation), Chair of HSOG (Head of Sustainability, HCC) and the Chair of the Carbon Subgroup (Programme Manager, Carbon, HCC). Once a dedicated retrofit officer is recruited, that individual will also join the central team.

Emissions: refers to the release of greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. This includes carbon dioxide (CO2) and carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) emissions, primarily generated from the burning of fossil fuels.

External factors: Any factors outside the direct control of stakeholders involved in the LARA process. These may include national policies on incentives to install retrofits, the financial markets' interest in investing in retrofit schemes, or the fluctuating price of electricity or fossil fuels that impact residents and the choices they may make.

Governance Working Group: The working group volunteered during the LARA process whose membership includes HSOG Chair, HCCSP Manager, and representatives from public health, training colleges, energy charities, and some of the local authority sustainability officers of Hertfordshire.

Internal factors: Any factors that can be influenced or controlled by LARA stakeholders. Examples include the ability to apply for available grants, a college expanding its training courses, or a community organisation sharing relevant communications with its audiences.

Local: predominantly means the geographic county of Hertfordshire with the qualifying phrases intending to mean:

- **Local demand:** The market for retrofit work, products and services within the geographic area of Hertfordshire.
- **Local contractors:** The practice of appointing contractors based in or near Hertfordshire, with preference given to those within 50 miles of Welwyn Garden City as the central point in Hertfordshire, where legally permissible. This approach supports the local economy by creating jobs, reducing traffic related emissions and congestion and strengthening the regional supply chain. It also enables closer collaboration with local training providers such as colleges and universities. Where local contractors are unavailable, proximity-based selection should still be considered, subject to procurement regulations.
- **Local benefits:** The co-benefits of retrofit work that improve the health, wellbeing and environmental conditions of the human and natural communities within Hertfordshire.

Local Area Retrofit Accelerator or "LARA" Process: Refers to the LARA process: a series of three workshops involving key stakeholders from the retrofit supply chain in Hertfordshire. The outputs of this process include the LARA Commitment document and this Retrofit Strategy.

Natural Capital: The world's stocks of natural assets including geology, soil, air and water and all living things which provide ecosystem services essential to life and human wellbeing.

Task and Finish Group: Any task-specific group formed from the pool of wider LARA stakeholders (and beyond), created to address a particular action or initiative related to the retrofit process.

Wider LARA Stakeholders: The full list of representatives from stakeholder groups involved in the retrofit system in Hertfordshire, detailed in the appendices of this strategy.

Any other terms, acronyms or references are expanded in the text or available on a simple internet search.

3. The retrofit strategy

The Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy sets out how Hertfordshire can make progress in tackling greenhouse gas emissions from the heating and cooling of domestic buildings and the alleviation of fuel poverty.

The Strategy sets out a plan to support growth in the green sector, with investment in both private and social housing whilst creating skilled and well-paid jobs. The Strategy is centred around decision making which balances economic, social and environmental factors, and focuses on forward planning for the climate to come. These themes are captured in the vision and mission and are articulated in the goals and actions to achieve them.

The Strategy was developed as part of the Local Area Retrofit Accelerator project ("LARA") held in the autumn and winter of 2024/25. This initiative considered a systems approach to tackling retrofit, using baselining and visioning to agree a series of actions and goals to lead to an agreed outcome.

More details on LARA, the facilitators and funding, and the co-collaboration efforts of the participants to develop this Strategy, are provided in the Appendices.

Identified strategic goals

- **Increasing the uptake of appropriate domestic retrofit measures through enhanced advice services and financial mechanisms.**
- **Maximising co-benefits such as local economic growth, health improvements, and environmental resilience.**
- **Strengthening the supply chain by boosting skills, quality assurance, and contractor capacity.**
- **Ensuring a coordinated, trusted delivery model through strong governance, partnerships, and policy alignment.**

Strategy to implementation

To transition from strategy to implementation, the following immediate steps are recommended:

1

Establish oversight and operational mechanisms: A governance body will oversee implementation and monitor progress. It will have broad stakeholder representation from the LARA stakeholder group while remaining independent of HCCSP. The exact structure and level of involvement will be shaped collaboratively to balance capacity and effectiveness.

2

Develop a financial roadmap: Identify and align funding opportunities and needs with strategic priorities to ensure sustainable investment.

3

Launch targeted pilot initiatives: Deploy early interventions to build confidence, refine delivery models, and scale successful approaches.

4

Enhance stakeholder coordination: Formalise engagement mechanisms to continue collaboration across public, private, and community sectors.

By focusing on structured delivery, Hertfordshire can lead the way in scaling retrofit at pace and ensuring homes are fit for the future.

The strategy is endorsed by

- Black Architecture
- Catapult
- Clarion Housing Group
- Dacorum Borough Council
- East Herts District Council
- Energy Saving Trust
- Grand Union Community Energy (GUCE)
- Greater South East Net Zero Hub
- Green Heat Coop
- Hertford Regional College
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire Futures
- Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter
- Hertsmere Borough Council
- Knebworth Environmental Group
- Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation
- National Energy Foundation
- National Retrofit Hub
- North Herts District Council
- Oaklands College
- Pyramid Solutions
- Sovereign Network Group / SNG
- St Albans City & District Council
- Stevenage Borough Council
- Sustain Homes (Watford)
- Three Rivers District Council
- Watford Borough Council
- Watford Community Housing Trust
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- West Herts College

4. Vision and mission

Vision Statement

"Every home is fit for now and for our future"

Mission Statement

"Collaborating in Hertfordshire to retrofit homes in need, so that we enhance our environment and climate resilience, address fuel poverty, improve health and support local jobs."

5. SWOT analysis

The Strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive shared understanding of the current retrofit system in Hertfordshire as at autumn 2024 (see Appendices), recognising the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Strengths

Strengths include established collaborative networks such as HCCSP and Hertfordshire Futures, a green skills programme, the pilot project experience through LARA, varied population types for testing retrofit models, homeownership levels that favour private funding, and a history of attracting grants.

Opportunities

Opportunities identified include the potential for developing a county-wide retrofit strategy, securing funding, promoting local job creation, leveraging innovation, working with local communities, and partnering with private investment. Also, aligning with health and social care objectives could provide opportunities to integrate retrofit with broader public health goals and broaden opportunities for identifying funding.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses involve a lack of clear regional priorities and alignment across stakeholders, skills gaps, procurement issues, and public misunderstandings of retrofitting. Addressing these will require strategic actions across governance, policy, and resource management.

Threats

Threats primarily stem from a lack of consistent funding and access to grants, policy delays, capacity strain, and the urgency of climate change response. Regulatory changes and shifts in funding priorities could slow progress, so these will need to be managed with a clear, adaptable strategy.

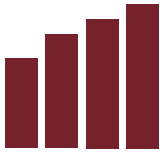
This analysis provides a context for actions to sit within, addressing weaknesses while building on strengths, maximising opportunities and maintaining an awareness of the impact of external threats outside of the wider LARA stakeholders' influence.

6. Shared principles

The Strategy is guided by four core principles that shape all actions and commitments by signatories:

Work Together

Collaboration and partnership working require commitments to fairness, honesty, equity, and shared accountability.



Evidence-Led Approach

Actions should be based on clear evidence, with data collection and evaluation ensuring continuous learning.

Sustainability Focused

Solutions must balance environmental, economic, and social (to include consideration of heritage and cultural) impacts while maximising local benefits.

Ambitious but Realistic

The Strategy should balance risk awareness with bold action, aiming to optimise outcomes rather than maximise risks.

In May 2025, the Commitment to Retrofit was endorsed by stakeholders to ensure these principles remain at the core of all activities.

7. Outcomes

The Strategy is designed to deliver measurable improvements in the following areas:

Health

Improved mental and physical outcomes

Equity

Improvement in people's life outcomes

Affordability

Increased ability to maintain homes at healthy temperatures without financial strain

Energy efficiency

Reduced energy consumption and associated emissions from heating, cooling and powering homes

Productivity

Growth in high-skilled, sustainable jobs and businesses

Resilience

Homes fit for the future climate and environment

These outcomes are interdependent and will be collectively achieved across all Strategy goals, reflecting the systems-based approach at the heart of this work. Progress will be monitored through a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be defined as part of actions 2.2C, 2.3A, 4.1A, 4.2B and 4.2C.

At this stage we would expect the following to be part of that suite:

- Average EPC rating across Hertfordshire, adjusted for building age and tenure to provide a fair reflection of housing stock.
- Number of retrofits completed and measures installed.
- Fuel poverty indices.
- Number of people employed in retrofit careers, including apprenticeships and training completions.
- Number of accredited installers (e.g. MCS, Trustmark) operating in Hertfordshire.
- Prevalence of health issues due to damp and/or mould.
- High quality and impactful collaboration: Number of joint initiatives and strategic partnerships.
- Number of active community-funded retrofit projects and community energy organisations.
- Number of MCS accredited installations per year.
- Investment secured and delivered through a retrofit body (see action 4.1B)
- Monitored value for money of installing retrofit measures compared to a baseline.

Some KPIs may rely on proxy measures where direct measurement is challenging – for example, assessing the impact of 'knowledge sharing'.

8. Goals

The following goals and sub-goals have been determined:

Goal 1

Increase uptake and successful delivery of domestic retrofit advice and measures

1.1. Increase access to trusted advice and guidance
1.2. Increase retrofit investment in private housing (both owner occupied and privately rented)
1.3. Increase retrofit investment in social housing

Goal 2

Realise the co-benefits for Hertfordshire

2.1. Realise local economic benefits
2.2. Realise health and wellbeing benefits
2.3. Realise environmental benefits

Goal 3

Increase supply chain capacity and quality in Hertfordshire through improved retrofit standards and demand

3.1. Increase retrofit capacity and quality
3.2. Increase demand for training and ensure adequate capacity/quality

Goal 4

Create a confident, trusted retrofit environment

4.1. Develop suitable retrofit strategy governance and delivery arrangements
4.2. Increase collaboration, data-sharing and learning
4.3. Ensure local policies are supportive

Goal 1

Increase uptake and successful delivery of domestic retrofit advice and measures

Rationale: This goal is to directly increase the number of retrofit measures being carried out in homes in Hertfordshire and therefore become 'fit for now and the future'. The sub-goals split this between the two main domestic ownership groups: private (owner-occupied, and privately rented) and social housing. There are some actions that will help both tenures but there is value in treating them differently. For example, private homeowners and social landlords can access different grant schemes and are affected by different regulations. Individual behaviour as a tenant or an owner may need different approaches also. A large focus of this goal is in supporting and facilitating action and a reliance on grants and/or value for money evidence to help bring it about.

Assumptions: The goal assumes grants, low-interest loans or private investment will be accessed when a persuasive offer can be told and a supply chain able to deliver. Economic conditions will have a big impact on the ability to deliver this goal. The goal also assumes that any short-term increase in demand can be delivered by the existing supply chain or with minimal formal training concurrently with the increased supply chain capacity being developed through Goal 3.

Goal 2

Realise the co-benefits for Hertfordshire

Rationale: This goal is to help drive take up of appropriate, high-quality retrofit measures by maximising the benefit they provide to the locality and therefore improve the local business case. For example, if people can see retrofit delivers local jobs and better life outcomes then they are more likely to engage with retrofit. Whether that be as an informal promoter, by purchasing measures or working in the supply chain. The sub-goals split this between the three main types of benefits: economic, social and environmental. This goal will also help to reinforce the benefit of retrofit to stakeholders involved in delivering the Strategy. Through articulating these co-benefits, there are opportunities for enhancing scarce resources through shared outcomes, aligned funding applications (where different groups are eligible for related but different resources) and broader stakeholder opportunities.

Assumptions: The goal assumes retrofit can deliver a wide range of benefits and that these can be measured directly or indirectly to determine performance.

Goal 3

Increase local supply chain capacity amd quality in Hertfordshire through improved retrofit standards and demand

Rationale: This goal is the counter to goal 1, developing supply to meet current and future demand. Importantly for delivery of the vision, this goal also works towards ensuring quality within the supply chain. This is important to ensure emissions-reductions are delivered but also to give consumers trust and confidence in the works and increase demand. The sub-goals split this between ensuring demand for training, capacity to deliver training and delivery of informal training support, particularly for micro and small to medium-sized (SME) businesses.

Assumptions: The goal assumes formal and informal training courses are available. Also, that there will be an increase in demand in the medium-long term. With many training courses taking c. 3 years to complete, work needs to start now to meet the stated demand growth.

Goal 4

Create a confident, trusted retrofit environment

Rationale: This goal is to ensure the vision and strategy has a supportive and trusted eco-system. Critically this goal covers the governance and people element needed to deliver the Strategy but also highlights actions to ensure continued collaboration. Much of the retrofit system is affected by public policy and this goal covers policy-related actions.

Assumptions: The goal assumes a governance arrangement can be achieved which all strategy signatories can agree to, which can be resourced for sufficient time to embed the growth of retrofit into 'business as usual' across Hertfordshire.

Conclusion: A collective commitment to action

The Hertfordshire Local Retrofit Strategy is not just a plan—it is a commitment to action. By aligning stakeholders, resources, and expertise, we are setting the foundation for lasting change in the way homes are adapted for a low-carbon future and the future climate.

The journey ahead will require sustained collaboration, innovative approaches, and collective determination. Success will be measured not just in KPIs but in warmer and cooler homes, healthier residents, thriving local businesses, and a community empowered to take charge of its energy future. The Strategy provides a clear path forward—now, it is up to all of us to turn ambition into impact.

With governance structures in development, funding pathways envisioned, and stakeholder partnerships established, the next steps are clear. Hertfordshire has the opportunity to demonstrate that a well-coordinated, place-based approach to retrofit can deliver meaningful results for people, the economy, and the planet.

From determined but disparate first steps in retrofit over recent years, this Strategy will be the acceleration Hertfordshire needs for a sustained, ambitious journey—one that ensures every home in Hertfordshire is fit for now and for the future.

The Local Area Retrofit Accelerator project in Hertfordshire is convened by HCCSP and delivered by the MCS Foundation

Design by Beehive Green