



Innovate
UK

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Creating Better Places

Ten areas where local innovation can improve lives and unlock growth

Resource pack 09

Strengthening the supply chain and workforce



Delivered by Urban Foresight for Innovate UK's Net Zero Living Programme.

Grounded in insights from the local authorities which participated in Innovate UK's Net Zero Living Programme.

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The opportunity



Strengthening the supply chain and workforce

A capable supply chain and skilled workforce are essential to turning plans into reality. When skills, training and business capacity are aligned with real delivery demand, local authorities can accelerate progress, support local jobs and strengthen economic resilience. Done well, this reduces delays, increases quality and makes delivery more reliable.

This is also a growth opportunity for places. The UK is scaling clean energy and retrofit activity, but skills and supply chain capacity are not keeping pace¹. Places that build capability early can help local firms move into growing markets, compete for larger contracts, and retain more economic value locally².

It also depends on making routes into new roles visible. Many young people and career changers do not see retrofit and clean energy as real local job options. Local authorities are addressing this. For example, Bristol has built structured work experience and careers support through Bristol WORKS, and council plans include expanding pathways into green jobs, including retrofit³. Gateshead Council is proving that delivering low-carbon heat is as much about building trust and skills as pipes and pumps. The council is mapping skills gaps and working with training providers to ensure local

people can benefit from the new jobs that will be created. Regional services can also help, for example Skills Connect in the West of England, which provides training and careers support linked to green skills⁴.

Clear signals about future demand also give businesses and training providers greater confidence to invest, helping markets develop in step with local ambitions rather than lagging behind.

A partnership between Birmingham City Council, the University of Birmingham, and Tyseley Energy Park is supporting the creation of a Green Energy Innovation Quarter to decarbonise power, heat, and waste while enabling inclusive economic growth. With support from the Net Zero Living Programme, Birmingham City Council is building relationships with local businesses to help them develop the skills, knowledge and support networks needed to benefit from becoming more sustainable.

Mid and East Antrim have partnered with a local college on hydrogen and green skills development. The Net Zero Living Programme project is supporting to explore how cutting emissions can also cut costs, boost investment

and drive innovation. The result is a stronger, better connected local economy and a replicable model for how industrial regions can turn the net zero transition into an opportunity for growth.

Rather than generic skills strategies, local authorities participating in the Net Zero Living Programme adopted demand-led workforce and supply chain planning.

They did this in three key ways:

→ **Building retrofit delivery by investing in local skills.**

For example, how Perth and Kinross Council turned a supply chain gap into a catalyst for workforce development.

→ **Targeted skills development across the ecosystem.**

For example, how Newham Council combined internal capacity-building with targeted external skills activity to support future delivery.

→ **Using place-specific roadmaps to align skills planning with future demand.**

For example, how local partners in Staffordshire linked skills mapping to local economic priorities and future infrastructure demand.

1 DESNZ (2025) [The clean energy jobs plan](#)

2 LGA (2021) [Local Green Jobs Report](#)

3 LGA (2022) [Bristol WORKS](#)

4 West of England Mayoral Combined Authority, [Green skills](#)

How to use this pack

This pack is part of the [Creating Better Places: Ten areas where local innovation can improve lives and unlock growth](#) series. Through its Net Zero Living Programme, Innovate UK provided funding, insights, and specialist support to local authorities so they could adopt social, cultural, policy, and technical innovation to help their place prosper.

Produced by Urban Foresight for Innovate UK, this series focuses on ten familiar areas of local delivery where participating local authorities and their project partners have done things differently, so that decarbonisation enables better outcomes for people, services and local economies.

The series includes a handbook providing an overview of all ten areas where there are opportunities for local innovation, alongside ten resource packs like this one.

Each pack focuses on a single area where new approaches can improve lives and unlock growth. It brings together insights from places in the Net Zero Living Programme, key concepts, practical tried and tested steps for local authorities and their partners to take, and further resources.



Who this pack is for

This handbook is designed for people working in or alongside UK local authorities who are shaping better local outcomes by delivering projects that could support net zero, including:

- Officers working in regeneration, housing, infrastructure, economic development or sustainability.
- Colleagues in finance, planning, procurement and governance.
- Partners from business, community organisations and delivery bodies.

It is written for people making real decisions in real places, often under pressure, with limited time and resources.



What this pack is for

Use this pack to:

- Learn what's possible through real examples from other local authorities.
- Build confidence by learning how they navigated familiar challenges.
- Act and make progress using practical steps, tools and prompts you can adapt to your local context.

By changing how local delivery works, places are meeting urgent needs and unlocking warmer homes, better services, lower costs energy, stronger local economies and greater public trust.

Local authorities are leading the way in showing how decarbonisation is a route to better everyday outcomes for resilient places and economic prosperity.



How this pack is structured

Each resource pack in the Creating Better Places series follows a consistent structure so you can quickly find what you need:

Resource pack structure



The opportunity

Understand why it's worth taking a new approach to improve this area of local delivery.



Insights from places in the Net Zero Living Programme

Learn how local authorities participating in the Net Zero Living Programme overcame barriers by doing things differently.



Key concepts

Short explanations of helpful ideas.



Practical steps

Actions, prompts and checklists.



Tools and resources

Tried and tested tools and approaches used by places in the Programme.



Further reading

Recommended reading for those who want more.

How to use this pack in practice

This resource pack is designed to be dipped into when needed. You don't need to read it from start to finish. Instead, go straight to the sections most relevant to your role, challenge, or stage of delivery, to:

- **Orient yourself**
Understand how others approached specific issues and what made progress easier.
- **Align colleagues and partners**
Use practical tools in team meetings, workshops, or strategy sessions to create shared understanding and momentum.
- **Support delivery**
Use the practical steps and tools to shape actions, test readiness, inform business cases and governance conversations, and scale implementation and the resulting impact for local people, services and suppliers.
- **Avoid starting from scratch**
Use the examples and resources to build on what already exists, locally and nationally.

The ten areas where there are opportunities to innovate are interconnected, but you don't need to work through them in a set order. Progress in one area often unlocks progress in others. You're encouraged to move between the resource packs in the Creating Better Places series that are most relevant to your changing needs as your work evolves.

How this pack fits

This pack is designed to be used alongside:

- The core [Creating Better Places handbook](#), which provides an overview of where local authorities participating in the Net Zero Living Programme have done things differently in ten familiar areas of local delivery, so that decarbonisation enables better outcomes for people, services and local economies.
- The other resource packs, each exploring one of the remaining nine areas where local innovation can improve lives and unlock growth.




Putting people at the centre of place-based change



Embedding net zero as an enabler of better services



Building local authority capacity




Governance to navigate political and institutional change



Enabling partnerships for place-based innovation



Regional collaboration to scale climate action



Digital platforms for collaboration



Building investable pipelines



Strengthening the supply chain and workforce



Models, approaches and tools ready for real-world scale

Insights from places in the Net Zero Living Programme



Insight #1

Building retrofit delivery by investing in local skills in Perth and Kinross

How Perth and Kinross Council turned a supply chain gap into a catalyst for workforce development.

At a glance

Perth and Kinross Council set out to accelerate home retrofit through a community-led One Stop Shop⁵ (OSS).

Early engagement with residents and local businesses revealed a critical constraint: a shortage of skilled contractors, particularly in rural areas. Rather than treating this as an external risk, the project team made workforce capacity a central design factor.

By systematically mapping local supply, listening to businesses about barriers to growth, and linking retrofit demand to training and employability pathways, Perth and Kinross Council reframed skills shortages as a place-based opportunity.

This approach shaped a more credible, deliverable retrofit model and laid the foundations for local jobs and resilient supply chains.

What they did

- **Diagnosed the problem through business-led evidence:** Alongside community engagement, the project worked closely with local contractors, trade bodies and retrofit organisations. Mapping construction and retrofit-related businesses across Perth and Kinross revealed gaps in key skills, capacity constraints among sole traders, and acute challenges in rural areas where housing costs and short-term lets limit workforce availability.
- **Used the One Stop Shop as a clear demand signal:** The One Stop Shop (OSS) was designed to be more than just a customer-facing advice service. It was explicitly framed as a mechanism to create clearer, more predictable demand for retrofit, giving local businesses confidence to invest in training, certification and new roles. Skills and supply chain considerations were embedded into the OSS business plan from the outset.

5 Perth and Kinross One Stop Shop: [The Heat Project Scotland](#)

- **Mapped training needs and pathways:** The team identified priority green skills requirements across trades such as heating, insulation, electrical and retrofit coordination. This work connected local businesses with training providers and informed future plans to link retrofit delivery with employability and skills programmes, including partnerships with further education and regional training bodies.
- **Addressed structural barriers to participation:** Engagement highlighted that small local firms were often excluded from local authority procurement and struggled to take on apprentices or subcontractors. The project explored how cooperative models, partnership working through trade associations, and changes to procurement approaches could better support local and regional suppliers.
- **Linked skills to wider economic development goals:** By involving employability and economic development teams, Perth and Kinross Council positioned retrofit not just as a climate intervention, but as a pathway to local jobs, business resilience and rural economic sustainability. This alignment helped secure follow-on funding and institutional support beyond the initial Net Zero Living Programme project.

Outcomes

- **A more deliverable retrofit model:** The One Stop Shop (OSS) was identified as the most practical way to scale retrofit locally because it responded to real supply side constraints instead of assuming capacity already existed. Skills shortages were treated as something to plan for from the start, not as a problem to discover later.
- **Clear evidence to justify investment in skills:** Detailed mapping and business insight created a robust evidence base for targeted training and upskilling initiatives, strengthening the case for future funding and partnership with skills providers. Clear, credible pipelines, such as a One Stop Shop, give businesses the confidence to upskill, collaborate and grow. When firms can see sustained local demand, they are more willing to invest in training, apprenticeships and new capabilities.
- **Stronger relationships with the local retrofit sector:** The local authorities played an important and influential role in convening stakeholders around a collective aspiration. Sustained engagement built trust with contractors and trade bodies and positioned Perth and Kinross Council as a facilitator of opportunity rather than just a commissioner of work. This improved confidence in the OSS and future delivery plans.

Key learnings

- 1. Treat skills as core infrastructure, not a secondary issue**
Workforce capacity should shape delivery models from the start, not be addressed once programmes stall. Mapping supply chains and skills early helps ensure delivery plans reflect what can realistically be built and installed locally.
- 2. Use business engagement as a diagnostic tool**
In-depth conversations with local contractors reveal practical constraints and opportunities that skills plans developed from behind a desk often miss. Businesses can identify where certification, training or procurement changes would make it easier for them to participate in delivery.
- 3. Local authorities can act as facilitators of market development**
Beyond commissioning projects, councils can convene partners, connect employers with training providers and help coordinate supply chain growth. This role helps create the conditions for local firms to participate and invest in new capabilities.

Why it matters

Local authorities can play an important role in bringing stakeholders together around a shared goal. By taking a proactive approach to stakeholder engagement, local supply chains can be linked to local job opportunities and strengthen workforce resilience.

This project shows that retrofit delivery cannot be separated from workforce realities. Skills shortages are often described as a national challenge, but this work shows the value of diagnosing them locally and designing responses that reflect place-specific conditions.

By aligning retrofit ambition with training, employability and supply chain development, the Council reduced delivery risk and increased the likelihood that investment will translate into real upgrades to local homes, delivered by local businesses.

This is particularly relevant for rural and mixed urban-rural authorities where capacity constraints may be acute and where visible local economic benefits can help sustain political and community support for net zero action.



Insight #2

Targeting skills development to support Newham's just transition

How the London Borough of Newham combined internal capacity-building with targeted external skills activity to support future delivery.

At a glance

Newham Council's Net Zero Living Programme project focused first on building the internal capability needed to lead and coordinate a just transition. This created the foundation for targeted skills and learning activity beyond the council, reaching residents, community organisations, businesses and young people.

Rather than delivering a stand-alone workforce programme, Newham linked external skills activity to specific delivery priorities such as retrofit, heat resilience and the circular economy, helping prepare people for future roles in live and emerging programmes.

What they did

- **Built internal capability to support external impacts:** Newham Council delivered tailored just transition training to its staff across departments and created dedicated green economy roles. Of the 819 people trained through the project, 527 were council staff. This additional capability within Newham Council enabled coordination of skills activity and enabled new partnerships beyond the local authority.

- **Delivered skills and learning to external audiences:** Of the 819 people trained, 292 were not council employees. There were:
 - ▶ English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners, trained through adult education routes (255 people).
 - ▶ Representatives from community organisations and businesses, where training was focused on how climate action links to housing, health, energy costs and local work opportunities (37 people).
- **Linked external learning to delivery themes:** External skills activity was connected to live and planned initiatives, including housing retrofit, solar feasibility and circular economy proposals. This ensured learning activity reflected real local delivery contexts rather than generic skills provision.
- **Created paid pathways for young people:** In addition to the internal council and wider training undertaken, Newham Council secured £100,000 of external funding to deliver paid green skills training for young people, linked to retrofit and community

energy activity. This provided a direct route from training into paid experience, rather than relying solely on unpaid placements or short courses.

- **Used evidence to plan future skills needs:** Newham Council commissioned external analysis to identify the jobs and skills required to deliver the large-scale retrofit of council housing stock. This work is now informing future skills planning and the borough's Green Skills Strategy.

Outcomes

- **Reached a wide group of people:** Nearly 300 residents, learners, community organisations and businesses took part in training linked to climate and green economy activity, expanding participation beyond the 527 members of council staff involved. External training was delivered through existing routes, including adult education (ESOL) and sessions with community organisations and businesses. Public-facing training was made available to networks and community groups on request.
- **Integrated skills activity with delivery themes:** External learning was planned around live and emerging work on housing retrofit, solar feasibility, heat resilience, and the circular economy. This enabled stronger links between skills activity and local authority delivery.

- **Created a funded route for young people to progress from learning into paid experience:** £100,000 was secured to support paid green skills training linked to retrofit and community energy.
- **Established a baseline for workforce planning:** Analysis commissioned through the project identified jobs and skills needed for large-scale housing retrofit and is informing the borough's Green Skills Strategy.

Key learnings

- 1. Start with internal capability and coordination**
Without dedicated roles, internal ownership and cross-department coordination, external skills activity is difficult to organise and sustain. Building internal capability first helps councils act as convenors, coordinate partners and ensure workforce initiatives are aligned with real delivery priorities. .
- 2. Use delivery programmes as the 'anchor'**
Skills activity is most effective when it is linked to real programmes already underway or in development. Using delivery priorities such as housing retrofit or heat resilience to shape training audiences and content helps ensure learning reflects practical needs rather than generic green skills ambitions.

3. Design for progression, not just participation

Training programmes create greater impact when they lead to clear next steps. Building in progression routes such as paid work, placements, apprenticeships or employer links helps participants move from learning into employment or practical delivery roles.

Why it matters

Evidence from Newham Council shows that building skills for a just transition is not only about training staff or delivering technical courses. It also involves preparing people outside the Council to engage with future delivery, through learning that is linked to real programmes, paid opportunities and planned investment.

Newham Council's approach shows how local authorities can extend skills building beyond their own organisation, reduce future delivery risk, and improve readiness in the local economy, while recognising that workforce delivery sits across many partners.

Insight #3

Using place-specific roadmaps to align skills planning with future demand

How local partners in Staffordshire linked skills mapping to future infrastructure demand and economic priorities.

At a glance

Staffordshire's experience shows that linking detailed skills mapping to a clear, time-bound, place-specific roadmap provides an effective signal to the local skills market. By articulating what infrastructure and economic activity is expected to develop, where, and when, the roadmap creates shared clarity on future workforce demand. This helps education providers, employers and suppliers prepare for emerging opportunities rather than react to shortages.

In Staffordshire, partners developed a county-wide roadmap to understand how changes in energy infrastructure, transport systems and land use could affect future workforce needs. This provided a practical reference point for skills planning across sectors. To strengthen the evidence base, this work can also be informed by Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES), the annual projections produced by electricity Distribution Network Operators. DFES forecast how electricity demand, distributed generation and new technologies may evolve at regional level, helping local areas anticipate infrastructure needs and associated workforce demand.

Staffordshire's rural economy means workforce demand looks different from many other places. The county produces around 8% of the UK's milk supply and includes significant agricultural and land-based activity. As a result, skills demand extends beyond the sectors typically emphasised in national workforce discussions, including land management, agricultural innovation and rural infrastructure.

Using local economic conditions as the starting point allowed partners to identify the specific workforce capabilities required to support future economic development.

What they did

- **Used a place-specific roadmap to guide skills analysis:** The roadmap set out the county's anticipated infrastructure and economic development priorities, ensuring workforce planning was linked to practical delivery needs.
- **Analysed future skills demand across four locally defined priority sectors:** Retrofit; electric vehicles and low-environmental impact transport; clean energy; and land use and agriculture.

- **Worked in partnership with Keele University to forecast workforce needs:** This analysis identified 48 relevant occupations and developed a skills taxonomy describing the capabilities associated with each role.
- **Mapped relevant further education provision:** Mapping covered provision delivered by two universities, twelve further education colleges in Staffordshire and neighbouring areas, and a range of independent providers.
- **Identified gaps between workforce readiness and anticipated delivery needs:** These were particularly in areas such as housing retrofit and infrastructure deployment.
- **Developed a public directory of verified suppliers:** The intention was to improve visibility of local businesses with the capability to support emerging markets.
- **Engaged employers, training providers and internal council teams:** Engagement sought to validate findings and establish a shared evidence base.

Outcomes

- **Produced a local skills demand profile:** This place-specific and time-bound profile described which skills were likely to be needed, in which sectors, and at what scale. It gave education providers and

employers a clearer basis for planning courses, recruitment and investment.

- **Created a baseline of current capacity:** By mapping training provision and supplier capability across Staffordshire and neighbouring areas, the baseline helped identify strengths, potential bottlenecks and opportunities for targeted support.
- **Published a directory of suppliers bringing information about relevant businesses into one place:** The directory provides a practical reference for the council, training providers and the wider market and supports coordination across the supply chain.

Key learnings

1. **Anchor skills development in a delivery-led roadmap**
Linking skills demand to a locally defined pipeline and timeframe gives training providers a clearer signal than a general national forecasts. It helps partners focus on the occupations and capabilities required to support economic growth.
2. **Make capacity visible before trying to expand it**
Mapping occupations, training provision and supplier capacity is an important enabling step. It reveals existing strengths, highlights where bottlenecks may emerge and helps target action more effectively.

3. Use shared evidence to align partners early

Bringing employers, providers and local institutions together around a common evidence base helps to build a shared understanding of future workforce needs and supports more coordinated planning.

Why it matters

Local authorities often recognise that new skills will be needed as infrastructure, technologies and economic activities evolve. However, national forecasts do not always translate easily into local workforce planning.

Staffordshire's approach shows how a place-specific roadmap, supported by shared evidence such as DFES projections, can help bridge that gap. By linking expected infrastructure development and economic priorities to the occupations and training provision needed to support them, local partners can provide clearer signals to the skills market.

For places with distinctive economic profiles, particularly rural or industrial areas where national narratives may not fully reflect local conditions, this approach can help align training provision, supply chains and labour markets with future economic opportunities.

Key concepts

**Four key concepts
to understand about
workforce planning for
decarbonisation**

Key concept 1

Delivery depends on workforce capacity

Workforce capacity is already affecting the pace and scale of decarbonisation programmes. Skills shortages are often discussed as a future risk, but evidence from places taking part in the Net Zero Living Programme shows they are already shaping what can realistically be delivered. Programmes to decarbonise homes, transport and infrastructure often depend on small and medium-sized firms that face constraints around recruitment, training and certification. In rural and mixed areas, these challenges can be intensified by housing costs, travel distances and seasonal labour patterns.

Treating workforce capacity as a core part of delivery planning helps avoid programmes stalling later. Places that map their local supply chain early understand the occupations required for upcoming projects and can work with providers and employers to strengthen training pathways that are better positioned to deliver programmes at pace while supporting local economic development.

What helps in practice:

- Map local supply chains and workforce capacity by sectors linked to net zero delivery.
- Identify occupations and skills likely to be required for upcoming programmes.
- Work with training providers to align provision with expected demand.
- Include workforce considerations in delivery planning and programme design.

Key concept 2

Local plans help the market prepare

Education providers, training bodies and employers often struggle to plan for green skills when future demand is uncertain. Local authorities can help address this by providing clearer signals through delivery plans, roadmaps and project pipelines. When priorities are translated into timelines and sector-specific opportunities, they give the local skills system something concrete to respond to.

Experiences from the Net Zero Living Programme show that place-specific demand signals help align workforce development with delivery. When employers, colleges and training organisations understand what is likely to be needed, and when, they are better able to plan courses, invest in training and

prepare the workforce needed to support local decarbonisation programmes.

When delivery plans are visible, this helps the skills market prepare for change:

- Publish place-based roadmaps and delivery plans linked to local priorities.
- Share forward pipelines of projects to signal future workforce demand.
- Translate economic programmes into workforce and training requirements.
- Engage education providers and employers early using shared evidence.

Key concept 3

Green skills cut across the workforce

Green skills are often associated with specialist technical roles such as retrofit coordinators, heat network engineers or clean energy installers. While these roles are important, most progress towards a more sustainable future depends on a broader shift in capability across the workforce.

Professionals involved in planning, procurement, housing, transport, finance, communications and service design all influence how projects are delivered. Building a basic understanding of environmental impact and sustainability across these roles helps

ensure climate considerations are integrated into everyday decisions rather than treated as a separate technical issue.

This is acknowledged by several national organisations. The Design Council frames “Skills for Planet⁶” as capabilities that should be developed across a profession, not held by a small group of specialists. The Institute of Sustainability and Environment Professionals or ISEP (formerly known as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, IEMA) positions sustainability skills as relevant “across all job roles”, supporting the idea that environmental understanding is becoming a baseline competency, not an optional extra. In the NHS⁸, there is a focus on building leadership capability for a greener health system, reinforcing that this is a mainstream workforce issue, not a niche function.

Local authorities can build climate competence as a core capability across many job roles and service functions:

- Build environmental and sustainability awareness across organisational roles.
- Integrate climate competence into staff training and professional development.
- Support leadership capability to manage organisational change.
- Encourage collaboration between technical specialists and operational teams.

Key concept 4

Meet people where they are

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of delivery in retrofit, low-carbon construction, and local energy services in the UK. If places can help local firms participate and scale, more value stays in the local economy and delivery becomes more resilient.

However, many SMEs face structural barriers. Public procurement can favour larger contractors or framework routes, making it harder for local firms to win work. SMEs also cite uncertain future demand, limited capacity for training, and burdensome accreditation requirements as reasons to delay investment in upskilling.

Learning from the Net Zero Living Programme suggests what helps. In Perth and Kinross, early engagement showed that smaller firms were willing to take part but needed enough confidence to invest in skills and workforce development. Clearer demand signals, procurement routes that worked for smaller suppliers, and stronger links between training pathways and upcoming delivery opportunities helped build that confidence.

Councils can help local firms deliver much of the transition if barriers to participation are addressed:

- Engage local businesses early to understand barriers to participation.
- Provide visibility of future delivery opportunities and project pipelines.
- Review procurement approaches to support participation by smaller firms.
- Link training pathways and apprenticeships to upcoming local projects.

6 Design Council Skills for Planet

7 ISEP [Environmental Sustainability Skills for the Workforce](#)

8 NHS Leadership Academy [Sustainability Leadership for Greener Health and Care Programme](#)

Practical steps



Six practical ways to strengthen local skills and supply capacity

Workforce and supplier constraints show up across many local delivery areas, including retrofit, low carbon heat, energy infrastructure, transport, and circular economy activity. In the Net Zero Living Programme, retrofit was the most consistent pressure point because it is labour-intensive, requires multiple trades and roles, and programmes are already moving from planning into delivery.

The practical steps below use housing retrofit as a worked example because it makes the workforce challenge visible and immediate. Most steps are transferable. If your priority is not retrofit, swap in your own programme, for example EV charging, heat networks, fleet or public estate upgrades, and use the same prompts to test readiness, strengthen supply and reduce delivery risk.

These steps were explored by the Net Zero Living Programme's retrofit working group and expert partners Regen and the Carbon Trust. They are not comprehensive. They reflect emergent learning from participating places and are intended as practical prompts you can adapt.

Reference sources: [Regen 2025 Policy Insight: The UK's retrofit workforce for heat and fabric efficiency](#) and [Innovate UK Business Connect News Article: Building local skills for housing retrofit in Newham \(2026\)](#)



Priority	What it involves	Net Zero Living Programme examples	Other examples
<p>Address internal governance</p>	<p>Agree how retrofit will be governed, how contracts will be structured and ensuring staff have the skills and capacity to manage programmes over time.</p>	<p>See examples from Forest of Dean District Council, Warrington Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council in Resource pack 03 Building local authority capacity.</p>	
<p>Use procurement to support local jobs and training</p>	<p>Embed social value clauses into retrofit contracts.</p> <p>Explore collaborative procurement routes that support long-term local workforce development.</p>	<p>Oldham Council - See Resource pack 02: Embedding net zero as an enabler of better services</p> <p>Newham Council Case Study - Innovate UK Business Connect News Article: Building local skills for housing retrofit in Newham (2026)</p> <p>Liverpool City Council Case Study – Regen (2025) Policy Insight: The UK’s retrofit workforce for heat and fabric efficiency</p>	<p>Cosy Homes Oxfordshire, Energy Saving Devon, YorEnergy</p>
<p>Partner with regional stakeholders</p>	<p>Identify local workforce demand and research into what specific skills different jobs require.</p> <p>Engage early with business representatives or membership organisations to demonstrate economic growth opportunities to local businesses.</p> <p>Work with existing colleges, training centres, and regional skills programmes to align courses with real delivery demand and design new educational programmes to meet future skills needs.</p>	<p>Staffordshire County Council – See Insight #3 in this resource pack.</p> <p>Fife Council case study in Better Warmer Homes: Learnings from the Net Zero Living Programme for scaling place-based retrofit, Regen (2025)</p>	<p>National Retrofit Hub</p>

Priority

Promote career opportunities, e.g., through schools and job centres

What it involves

Communicate clearly in an accessible way and through trusted channels to help people understand the skills needed, raise awareness of jobs and promote long-term career prospects.

Focus on reaching young people and career-changers where understanding of available opportunities can be particularly low.

Net Zero Living Programme examples

Bristol City Council Case Study - [Regen 2025 Policy Insight: The UK's retrofit workforce for heat and fabric efficiency](#)

Other examples

BristolWORKS,
Solar for Schools

Leverage trusted intermediaries for outreach

Take time to understand the complexity faced by households and small firms.

Engage through trusted intermediaries who can help by providing neutral advice, answering practical questions, and guiding people to support and vetted suppliers.

Offer trusted advice and a free assessment offer and build a network of retrofit "champions" to grow confidence and demand.

Consider a One Stop Shop model to make funding access and next steps clearer for residents.

Perth & Kinross Council – See [Insight #1](#) in this resource pack.

Northern Devon Primary Care Fuel Poverty Crisis Programme,

Carbon Co-op retrofit champions (Calderdale)

YorEnergy

Support small businesses

Provide targeted support that helps SMEs tackle practical barriers to entering retrofit markets and build capability. This could include a contribution towards accreditation costs, capacity building activities, and networking that helps businesses to collaborate.

See how Oxford City Council, Lambeth Council and Westmorland and Furness Council partnered with local businesses in [Resource pack 05: Enabling partnerships for place-based innovation](#)

Tools and resources

**Tools and methods index:
A selection of tools and
methods referenced in this
resource pack**



Tool/method	What it can help you do	Used by	Delivered by
<p>Staffordshire business suppliers' directory (The Green Suppliers Directory)</p>	<p>View or search a directory of suppliers local to Staffordshire that can offer a service, training, or products that support changes or upgrades to improve efficiency, reduce emissions and ultimately, save money.</p>	<p>Staffordshire County Council</p>	<p>Staffordshire Business and Environment Network (SBEN)</p>
<p>Regional retrofit skills taskforce checklist</p>	<p>A systematic checklist-style resource designed to support the creation of regional skills plans for Policy Officers, Delivery Officers, Home Energy Leads working within Net Zero Hubs, Combined Authorities and County Councils.</p>	<p>Staffordshire County Council</p>	<p>National Retrofit Hub</p>

Further reading



Net Zero Living Programme resources

Key Net Zero Living Programme resources on strengthening the supply chain and workforce:

- [Policy Insight - The UK's retrofit workforce for heat and fabric efficiency, Regen](#)
- [Innovate UK Business Connect Net Zero Living webinar: Green Skills for Net Zero: Mapping Workforce Needs and Opportunities](#)
- [Innovate UK Business Connect News Article: Building local skills for housing retrofit in Newham \(2026\)](#)

To find out more about the Net Zero Living Programme, visit:

iuk-business-connect.org.uk/programme/net-zero-living

Participant picks

Key resources that local authorities participating in Innovate UK's Net Zero Living Programme recommend:

- [Green Jobs Taskforce. \(2021\). Report to government, industry and the skills sector](#)
- [Skills Connect is the West of England's 'One Stop Shop' for all things training, skills and career support \(including green skills\)](#)
- [Hull and East Yorkshire Business, Growth and Skills Hub](#)
- [Green Jobs and Skills Analysis Report, Humber Hey Skills Partnership](#)
- [Transforming your organisation for the green economy: The green skills and green jobs your workforce need to succeed, Deloitte](#)
- [Skills for the Planet, Design Council - Practical visual resource to map green skills](#)
- [The European Commission has published a taxonomy \(classification system\) of skills for the green transition in European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations \(ESCO\). It includes 381 skills, 185 knowledge concepts and 5 transversal skills](#)

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It reflects the collective learning of the places taking part in the Net Zero Living Programme. Insights were gathered from project teams in local authorities and their partners across:

Argyll & Bute, Belfast, Birmingham, Blackpool, Blaenau Gwent, Bristol, Caerphilly, Calderdale, Cambridgeshire (Cambridgeshire, Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough city region), Cardiff, Coventry, Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire (Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Derby,

Derbyshire, Rushcliffe, Broxtowe and Gedling), Derry City & Strabane, Devon, Dorset, East Lothian, Essex, Forest of Dean, Gateshead, Greater Manchester (Manchester and Oldham) Gwynedd, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight, Leicestershire, Liverpool, London (Haringey, Lambeth, Newham and Westminster), Mid & East Antrim, Mid South West Northern Ireland, Norfolk, Northumberland, Outer Hebrides, Oxfordshire (Oxford, South Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire), Perth & Kinross, Peterborough, Portsmouth, Rossendale, Shetland & Orkney, South Downs, South East Scotland (Edinburgh, East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian), Southampton, Staffordshire, Surrey (Runnymede and Surrey), Wakefield, Warrington, Westmorland & Furness, and York.

The content of this resource pack reflects the collective insights drawn from the Programme and does not necessarily represent the official position of Innovate UK, participating local authorities or their partner organisations.

Creating Better Places

Ten areas where local innovation can improve lives and unlock growth



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Delivered by Urban Foresight for Innovate UK's Net Zero Living Programme.

Grounded in insights from the local authorities which participated in Innovate UK's Net Zero Living Programme.