

Green housing news

[Government faces backlash over 'zero-carbon-ready' homes proposal](#)

Jenrick has published a new whitepaper, outlining the biggest revamp to planning processes in more than 10 years. Under the new proposals, carbon emissions from new homes are expected to be 75 to 80% lower than current levels by 2025. As the grid continues to decarbonise, the Government expects the houses to be able to perform at zero-carbon levels “without the need for further costly retrofitting work”.

[A credible planning system has to be serious about the environment](#)

The prime minister now promises “radical reform unlike anything we have seen since the Second World War”. In his foreword to the white paper, the communities secretary, Robert Jenrick, channels the spirit of Greg Clark: the new system will deliver all good things for everyone. And behind the reforms? Another Policy Exchange alumnus, Jack Airey, the current prime minister’s planning adviser, and an advisory panel of Policy Exchange authors and advisers.

[House bricks could become energy storage systems to charge electrical devices](#)

A brick wall could one day become a powerbank to charge electrical devices, thanks to an energy storage breakthrough by scientists at Washington University in St Louis, US. Treating the bricks with chemicals can turn them into super capacitors, the team suggests, a type of energy storage system that can charge and discharge large amounts of power quickly.

[Will Rishi Sunak’s funding announcements help social landlords decarbonise their homes?](#)

As the government plans a “green recovery” from the coronavirus crisis, Lucie Heath explores whether the latest energy efficiency policy for housing will help social landlords meet decarbonisation targets. Taking to the despatch box earlier this month, chancellor Rishi Sunak set out his vision for a “green recovery” from the economic slump caused by coronavirus.

[‘Level up’ the Green Book to boost the North’s housing, report says](#)

The government should ‘level up’ the Treasury’s Green Book to redirect housing investment to the North of England and support the national recovery from COVID-19, a new report has found. The report by Homes for the North (H4N), an alliance of 17 Northern housing associations, finds that the

North is missing out on major housing investment due to the Green Book, which helps decide where public funds should be invested to drive economic development. The research, undertaken by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr), warns that the North of England could fall behind other regions of the UK if it lacks the funding to deliver new homes and retain its workers.

[Invest in MMC to prevent post-Covid housing shortage, RICS tells government](#)

RICS has urged the government to invest more in MMC to avoid a post-Covid housing shortage. In a new policy paper, RICS said that the government should support local authorities and housing associations to help drive the uptake of MMC. Financial incentives to encourage the construction of MMC factories in high unemployment areas as part of the government's industrial strategy would help the sector dodge a housing slump during the current economic conditions, according to the report.

Our North Net Zero

[Climate Emergencies - Ambition, Policy, Action](#)

Over 60 of the North's Local Authorities have declared climate emergencies. At the same time, the region's Housing Associations are also beginning to develop their own bold climate plans. As we all know, the challenge now is to turn this vital wave of ambition into clear local strategies. Join us on the **9th September** where we will be joined by key speakers from inside and outside the social housing sector to discuss the practical ways Local Authorities and Housing Associations are transitioning from ambition to action - building on the strengths of local assets and centring communities to ensure climate resilience. Additional resources are available [here](#).

Retrofit

[Don't demolish old buildings, urge architects](#)

Footage of buildings being flattened in a noisy demolition may be a popular feature of local TV news reports, but architects say such structures should be protected - to fight climate change. They say property owners should be incentivised to upgrade draughty buildings, not just knock them down.

[£1.2 million plans to install solar panels and energy efficiency measures in Craven District Council buildings](#)

Enthusiastic support has been given for a £1.2 million project which will see solar panels and other energy efficient measures installed in Craven District Council buildings. Last week, the council's policy committee unanimously agreed to progress the project, which will include £375,000 match funding, and last night, it was expected to be ratified by the full council. If all members agree to go

ahead with the plan, the council will submit a grant application to the European Regional Development Fund to part-fund the scheme. £375,700 in match funding.

[Greening homes: Turning round the construction supertanker](#)

The idea of a green recovery from economic crisis is not new. Many jobs are currently under threat, and the government is borrowing and spending vast sums of money to shore up the economy. Surely it makes sense to invest in creating 'green' jobs that will help tackle climate change. Several reports have come out during the Covid-19 pandemic arguing that green renovation of existing housing provides the biggest benefits in terms of jobs growth and emissions reduction. Green renovation ('retrofit') can reduce energy consumption in homes by 60% or more, while simultaneously improving occupant health, comfort and well-being.

Politics and Parliament

[Minister fails to provide details on future of £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund](#)

The future of the government's manifesto commitment to carry out a 10-year £3.8bn programme to decarbonise social housing stock remains unclear after the energy minister would not be drawn on whether it would be replaced by the government's new Green Homes Grant. In an interview with Inside Housing minister for business, energy and clean growth, Kwasi Kwarteng, failed to clarify whether the Social Housing Decarbonisation put forward in the 2019 Conservative manifesto would be set up separately to the £2bn Green Homes Grant announced by chancellor Rishi Sunak in his July statement.

[Government's green homes plan risks 'throwing people into the arms of scammers', MPs warn](#)

MPs have warned the Government that a "rushed" energy-saving scheme could leave homeowners at risk of being exploited by scammers and rogue traders. The new Green Homes Grant voucher system, announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak in this month's economic update, gives those eligible up to £5,000 towards improving the energy efficiency of their property. But the Liberal Democrats have raised concern that the "quick fix vouchers" could be "money thrown down the drain" if profiteers take advantage.

Net Zero movement

[Big investors to trial 'net zero' tools to decarbonise their portfolios](#)

A coalition of more than 70 pension funds and investment managers representing assets of \$16tn have designed a "net zero" framework to help strip out damaging carbon emissions across their portfolios by 2050. Efforts by large investors to tackle climate change have been hampered by a lack

of consensus on the best way to limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, a goal agreed at the 2015 Paris conference.

[We must act now to reach net zero by 2050](#)

The UK Green Building Council attributes 40% of the UK's total carbon emissions to the built environment. It is therefore imperative – pandemic or no pandemic – that we continue to take steps to achieve the government's ambition of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The problem is not that we are unable to build new, energy-efficient homes and commercial spaces; it is that 80% of the building stock that will exist by 2050 has already been built

[To deliver homes fit for the future, we may have to redefine 'zero-carbon'](#)

Demands to address climate issues must be based on strong factual foundations. One current flaw is the way that 'zero-carbon building' is used to mean whatever a developer, politician or lobbyist wishes. In the absence of government clarity, the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework published by the UK Green Building Council sets out the best definition.

[Why achieving net zero will be a tricky balancing act for housing associations](#)

In his Summer Statement, chancellor Rishi Sunak revealed details of a £2bn Green Homes Grant to help decarbonise housing. Ben Stansfield examines the context of the announcement and what it means for landlords.


Green COVID Recovery

[Can Britain create a 'green jobs revolution'?](#)

For Derek Horrocks, the end of the UK's coronavirus furlough scheme in October threatened to be pretty bleak. As the owner of an insulation company in Lancashire, Mr Horrocks said he had considered making some of his 45-strong workforce redundant when the jobs retention scheme ended in anticipation of a slow recovery in the construction sector. Now he is thinking of taking on new staff after the UK government last week published details of a £2bn scheme allowing homeowners to claim up to £5,000 off works to improve the energy efficiency of their properties.

[Housing offers huge jobs boost opportunity for the North](#)

The Housing sector could create 20,000 jobs in the North post-Covid and play a major role in the economic recovery of Northern communities with the right backing from the government claims a new paper. The paper, 'Net Zero and New Homes: Housing's Role in the North's Recovery', was produced by the Northern Housing Consortium (NHC), a membership organisation representing more than 90% of all social housing providers in the North of England.



[Make nature part of 'build build build' policy, green watchdog says](#)

Instead of blaming protected newts for thwarting the “build build build” agenda, politicians and developers must incorporate green thinking into the design of new infrastructure, according to the chair of the government’s conservation watchdog. Natural England’s Tony Juniper called on the government and planners to change their thinking to ensure environmental considerations were designed into new housing estates, as well as road and rail projects, at the beginning, rather than being a hasty “add-on” or “mitigation” at the end.

[Coronavirus: Housing upgrades urged to create thousands of jobs](#)

The Welsh Government said housing had an important role in the "green recovery" after Covid-19. Thousands of old homes should be "retro-fitted" with energy-saving improvements to create jobs as part of the economic recovery from coronavirus, housing bodies have urged. Better insulation and the latest energy-efficient technology could cut bills and help tackle climate change. The Federation of Master Builders wants Wales to push ahead with a programme.


Global good practice

[Green light for Glasgow’s largest Passivhaus development](#)

West of Scotland Housing Association (WSHA) has received planning consent from Glasgow City Council for its landmark Passivhaus social housing development in Glasgow’s East End. The new homes will be at a former brownfield site on the corner of London Road and Springfield Road on the edge of the Commonwealth Village in the shadow of Celtic Park and the Emirates Arena. The development, the largest of its kind in Glasgow, will comprise of 36 flats over six storeys and be created to meet Passivhaus standard which reduces the building’s carbon footprint and contributes towards the Scottish Government’s Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 target to reduce carbon emissions by 2050.

[Co-operative housing: A greener and more sustainable way of living?](#)

Frankie lives in a six-bedroom house on the outskirts of Leeds. She is her own landlord, but doesn’t own the house. Instead she is part of a co-operative housing group: together, they have been able to buy the house and then rent it at an affordable price back to themselves as tenants. Just a few miles away, another group has secured funding to design and build an eco-community of up to 30 households, including what is known as a common house: a shared house with a kitchen, laundry, workshops, a meeting space, guest rooms and gardens.



[Architecture students complete Passivhaus in South Dakota](#)

Architects Robert Arlt and Charles MacBride and a group of students in South Dakota have completed an experimental gabled Passivhaus, which they claim is the first in the area to "sell energy back to the grid".

Reports

[New housing should be to passive house standard — Climate Change Committee](#)

The call from the Committee on Climate Change is more ambitious than the government's own 2018 clean growth strategy, which the committee dismissed as "out of step with the urgent timeline needed". The committee has also called for gas heating to be phased out of new builds within six years, giving way to heat pumps. In its review 'UK housing: fit for the future?', the committee expressed dismay that government ambition appeared to be in retreat.

Read the report [here](#).

[Net-zero: the road to low-carbon heat](#)

A new Heat Commission established by the CBI and University of Birmingham has published a series of recommendations aimed at decarbonising heat as part of a strategy to achieve the UK's climate commitments on net-zero. Heat accounts for over a third of UK carbon emissions and is the most difficult challenge we face en-route to net-zero by 2050.

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