



# BUILT ENVIRONMENT JUST TRANSITIONS ACCELERATOR

*Advancing, Shaping, and Strengthening  
the Just Transition Together*

**T A K E A W A Y S**  
**POLICY WORKING GROUP (PWG)**  
**ONLINE SESSION**  
17 MARCH 2026



## TAKEAWAYS

# Policy Working Group (PWG) Online Session Q2 2026

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## Stakeholder Attendees

### Businesses

- Balfour Beatty
- GPE

### Civil Society Organisations

- Centre for Energy Equality
  - Re-Generate
  - UKGBC
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## PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

The session was an interactive and collaborative space, building on the PWG's inaugural discussion in Q4, 2025, with a focus on the PWG's core objective: collectively influencing current and emerging government policies and strategies to protect the right to adequate housing.

The workshop explored the evolving policy landscape, identifying high-impact opportunities for influence – particularly around the Housing Cost Neutrality principle, introduced through a shared Internal Policy Note, and a Business Case Explainer – and agreeing practical next steps to strengthen a coordinated, cross-sector voice.

## STATE OF PLAY

The session opened with a sense check exercise, which indicated that participants' knowledge of the Housing Cost Neutrality principle averages 2.375 out of 5, highlighting moderate awareness but limited depth of understanding and reinforcing the need for further shared learning and practical application.

# DISCUSSION POINTS

## A. Policy Horizon Gazing

(Shared by Kirsty Girvan, UKGBC)

### Warm Homes Plan & Delivery Mechanisms

- The Warm Homes Plan is recognised as the central UK government strategy this decade for improving home energy efficiency, reducing fuel poverty and supporting decarbonisation.
- Its three pillars – large-scale upgrades, fuel poverty reduction, and a “new offer for everyone” – combine public funding, regulation and market mechanisms.
- Delivery will rely on existing and evolving schemes (e.g. Warm Homes Local Grant, successor to ECO, Boiler Upgrade Scheme), alongside emerging financial tools such as low-interest loans.
- A notable policy shift towards electrification over insulation was highlighted.
- Greater clarity on funding, timelines, and delivery mechanisms is urgently needed to unlock investment and supply chain confidence.

### MEES & Private Rented Sector Dynamics

- The proposed uplift of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) to EPC C (new tenancies by 2028, all tenancies by 2030) is a central lever for delivering Warm Homes Plan outcomes.
- Estimated retrofit costs are £6,000–£7,000 per property, with a proposed £10,000 cap.
- Government modelling suggests average energy bill savings of approximately £210 per year per household at EPC C, highlighting both the potential tenant benefit and the challenge of aligning this with landlord investment incentives.
- Effective delivery will depend on clear funding pathways, landlord support, and robust enforcement, alongside strengthened tenant protections.
- The landlord base remains highly fragmented:
  - 94% are private/individual landlords
  - 45% own a single property (21% of tenancies)
  - 17% own five or more properties (49% of tenancies)
- This fragmentation has significant implications for risk appetite, compliance capacity, and policy design.

## B. Split Incentive & Housing Cost Neutrality

(Shared by Gordon Miller, BEJTA UK)

### Warm Homes Plan & Delivery Mechanisms

- The split incentive between landlords (who bear retrofit costs) and tenants (who benefit from energy savings) remains a fundamental barrier to delivery at scale.
- Housing cost neutrality – where ‘market rate’ rent increases are capped at the value of verified energy bill savings – was identified as a potentially useful mechanism to balance incentives and protections.
- However, significant design and implementation challenges remain:
  - Verification of energy savings, including behavioural variables
  - Limited data infrastructure and monitoring systems
  - Consequential risks of rent disputes and renoventions
- Without resolution, there is a risk that landlords limit action to minimum compliance, while tenants may face unintended cost increases or displacement.

## C. Planning Policy, Viability & Future Homes Standard

(Group Exercise)

- Tensions were identified between national planning reforms and retrofit ambitions, particularly where local authorities may be constrained from exceeding baseline standards.
- Policy fragmentation and inconsistency are creating uncertainty for industry and undermining delivery confidence.
- Participants highlighted growing concerns around development viability, particularly for SMEs, given cumulative regulatory requirements.
- Greater alignment across housing, climate, and economic policy is needed to enable both retrofit and new build delivery at scale.

## D. Political Barriers, Evidence & Advocacy Strategy

(Group Exercise)

- A key political risk is the perceived lack of a clear return on investment for landlords, which could constrain retrofit uptake.
- Emerging narratives around fairness, particularly where public subsidy is seen to benefit property owners without delivering clear tenant gains may undermine public and political support.
- Participants highlighted the importance of:
  - Engaging both tenant and landlord groups

- Framing advocacy around practical, solution-led proposals
  - Using coordinated, multi-signatory communications to strengthen influence
- Priority evidence gaps include:
    - Tenant experiences of rent increases and renoventions following retrofit
    - Interaction between retrofit, fuel poverty, and tribunal outcomes
    - Economic impacts, including links between housing insecurity, mental health, and productivity

## Visual outputs

- Include Slides from the [slide deck](#)
- 4-7 – title Horizon Gazing
- 11-13 – title: Group Exercise



## OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED

- Housing cost neutrality as a potential unifying concept to align tenant protection and landlord incentives
- Strengthening coalitions across tenant groups, landlords, and industry actors
- Using economic narratives (e.g. productivity, health, public spending) to broaden policy relevance
- Leveraging upcoming policy milestones (MEES, Renters' Rights Act, Warm Homes Plan implementation) as key influencing moments
- Building a stronger shared evidence base to underpin coordinated advocacy

## NEXT STEPS – STRATEGIC & PRACTICAL

### A. Strengthen Policy Influence

#### 1. Build shared understanding of housing cost neutrality

- Develop clearer articulation and practical implementation models
- Address evidence gaps on verification, enforcement, and behavioural impacts

#### 2. Prioritise solution-led engagement

- Frame recommendations as practical, evidence-backed solutions
- Develop case studies demonstrating viable retrofit and tenant protection models

### **3. Coordinate through coalitions**

- Share intelligence on policy engagement and stakeholder outreach
- Align messaging across organisations to strengthen collective influence

### **4. Engage strategically with Ministers and MPs**

- Use constituency-level evidence on fuel poverty, housing quality and economic impacts
- Target decision-makers with aligned interests and influence

## **B. Influence Key Emerging Policies**

### **5. Warm Homes Plan**

- Advocate for clarity on funding, delivery mechanisms, and consumer protections
- Promote long-term certainty to support investment and delivery

### **6. MEES Reform**

- Support ambitious standards alongside protections for low-income tenants
- Ensure alignment with funding and enforcement mechanisms

### **7. Renters' Rights Act**

- Engage on how tenant protections interact with retrofit incentives and rent setting

### **8. Future Homes Standard & Planning Policy – NPPF**

- Advocate for alignment between national and local policy frameworks
- Highlight implications for viability, resilience, and long-term housing quality

## **C. Build Influence Through Local & Devolved Channels**

### **9. Leverage local and devolved structures**

- Engage combined authorities and local actors on place-based retrofit and housing strategies

### **10. Support local delivery models**

- Promote integrated approaches linking housing adequacy, skills, and local economic development

## **D. Present a Unified Voice to Government**

### **11. Develop joint advocacy outputs**

- Produce shared letters, briefings, and consultation responses

### **12. Build a shared evidence base**

- Create a shared repository of data, case studies, and policy intelligence

### **13. Model a coordinated advocacy approach**

- Align multi-year, cross-sector engagement around practical, evidence-based solutions

# FUTURE CONVENINGS

The next PWG session will take place in Q2 2026.

## Apologies for Non-Attendance

### Businesses

- Lloyds Living
- Morgan Sindall

### Civil Society Organisations

- 89up

### Policymakers

- DLME



Institute for Human Rights  
and Business

## CONTACT

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Making human rights part of  
everyday business