

# REGENERATIVE PLACES FRAMEWORK FOR HOUSING

Homes as a catalyst for thriving places

Consultation Draft

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## About this consultation

The purpose of this consultation draft is to:

- Test and strengthen the ideas presented.
- Explore different interpretations of regenerative housing.
- Gather examples of emerging practice that can inform practical action.
- Identify gaps, opportunities and areas for further discussion.
- Build a shared understanding of how housing can contribute to thriving places.

The Framework does not assume that 'regenerative places' can be achieved through a single policy, programme or methodology. Nor does it suggest that there is one correct approach. Regenerative practice is inherently shaped by context. What works in one place may not work in another, and different organisations will begin from different starting points.

For this reason, the Framework is offered as an invitation rather than a prescription. Throughout the document, consultation questions are included to support reflection and feedback. We are particularly interested in:

- Which aspects of the Framework feel most useful or relevant.
- Whether the concepts presented resonate with practical experience.
- Which assumptions would benefit from further testing.
- What examples of emerging practice could be highlighted.
- What perspectives are currently inaccurate, underrepresented, or missing.

The responses received will help shape future iterations of the Framework and contribute to a wider conversation about the role of housing in creating healthier, more resilient and more regenerative places.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Why regenerative places?

The built environment is entering a period in which conventional delivery models are under increasing strain at precisely the moment when social need, climate risk and ecological decline are intensifying. Rising construction and energy costs, fragmented funding, pressure on project viability and widening affordability challenges are exposing where prevailing approaches to retrofit and new housing may need to evolve.

In this context, the business case for a regenerative approach is not only ethical or environmental; it is increasingly strategic. Housing projects shape far more than buildings. They influence health, local economies, energy and climate resilience, biodiversity, community trust, public finances, and people's ability to live a good life.

Yet many of these outcomes are still treated as secondary benefits rather than as integral components of housing's value. Long-term stewardship, community agency and system-wide learning are often considered late, if at all, rather than being designed into projects from the outset.

To illustrate what we mean by regenerative approaches, the Framework introduces three interconnected 'themes' that run throughout the document and offer practical entry points for change:

- **Investment and value:** how value is defined, who counts as a beneficiary, and which outcomes are recognised in financial decisions.
- **Organisational purpose, practice and relationships:** how purpose shapes what organisations choose to prioritise, how decisions are made, by whom and with whom, and how responsibility and accountability are distributed over time.
- **Living systems and living systems flows:** how the housing system interacts with the people, ecosystems, energy, water, materials, skills and information that flow through a place.

The themes are aimed at enabling better questions and stimulating more informed conversations, rather than defining a prescriptive solution. These are also complementary. A clearer sense of organisational purpose can shape how value is defined, what is prioritised and how organisations choose to work with others. In turn, a broader understanding of value invites

changes in practice and relationships, while more purposeful collaboration makes it possible to recognise and protect the living systems on which housing depends.

The Framework's central proposition is simple: homes and neighbourhoods perform better over time when development and retrofit are designed not merely to minimise harm, but to restore and strengthen the capacity of places to support life. Getting there depends less on a new compliance tool, and more on consistently asking three questions:

1. How is value being defined,
2. How are organisations working together, and
3. How is *this place* understood as a living system?

### How?

This Framework uses the Three Horizons<sup>1</sup> model to explore the transition from current practice towards more a regenerative housing system. The Three Horizons model is designed to help organisations navigate complexity, and helps create space to think about the future without becoming fixed on current constraints or assuming that everything must change at once.

We use this model to describe the constraints within current practice which make it difficult for well-intentioned stakeholders to make change happen alone. We also set out a vision of what a 'Regenerative Place' could be.

### What?

A 'North Star' vision of a regenerative housing system would understand homes not simply as products to be delivered, but as catalysts for thriving places that can contribute positively to the health of communities, local economies and natural systems.

We have set out nine 'Dimensions of Place' to provide a practical way of broadening how place performance is understood, based on holistic frameworks, impact metrics and certification systems that already exist. This sets out a direction of travel rather than a set of quantitative targets. Different places will prioritise different outcomes depending on their context, history and aspirations.

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<sup>1</sup> Three Horizons, A toolkit to help you think and plan for the long term. Available at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/news/future-proofyour-planning-with-easy-to-use-tool/three-horizons-toolkit/three-horizons-toolkit/>

At the centre of these Dimensions are our 'ways of working' recognising that to achieve different outcomes, we need to work differently together, build relationships that cultivate trust, and provide the enabling conditions for long-term collaboration.

Organisations cannot transform overnight, yet they can all take practical steps forwards. We suggest six key transitions from isolated asset performance towards places that thrive, from short-term optimisation towards long-term resilience, and from fragmented project delivery towards more integrated and regenerative value creation.

**Six key transitions towards Regenerative Places:**

Narrow value	→	Whole place value
Project completion	→	Long term stewardship
Consultation	→	Participation
Delivery capacity	→	Place capability
Managing nature	→	Working with nature
Fragmented decisions	→	Shared outcomes

## INTRODUCTION

### Homes are more than buildings

Homes are where life happens. They can be places of safety, care and belonging. They can be where people raise families, recover from illness, build relationships, work, learn and grow older. The quality of homes shapes physical and mental wellbeing, financial security and connection to the communities around us.

Housing insecurity, by contrast, is deeply felt. It can limit a person's ability to participate in society, carrying tangible personal costs alongside the measurable social impacts that often dominate policy discussion. Recognising this is part of what it means to take a broader view of value: the experience of home is not a soft outcome around the edges of housing policy, but central to whether a place is working.

Yet homes are about more than individual households. They sit within wider networks of streets, neighbourhoods, ecosystems, services and local economies. They draw upon flows of energy, water, materials, skills, finance and care. In turn, they influence public health, economic opportunity, social cohesion, biodiversity and climate resilience.

Housing is therefore far more than a collection of physical assets. It is one of the foundations upon which thriving places are built.

### Why now?

The UK housing sector is operating during a period of profound transition. Millions of existing homes require upgrading to improve comfort, affordability and resilience while reducing environmental impacts. At the same time, new homes are needed to meet changing demographic and economic needs.

Alongside these housing challenges sits a wider set of interconnected pressures. Communities are adapting to climate impacts such as overheating, flooding and water stress. Nature continues to face pressures from habitat loss and biodiversity decline. Public services are responding to growing demands associated with poor health and inequality. Rising living costs continue to affect household finances, while many local places are seeking greater collective resilience in the face of uncertainty.

These challenges are often addressed separately, yet in practice they are deeply connected. Equally, housing outcomes are shaped by decisions made in transport, energy, education, health, planning, land management and finance.

It is useful, then, to look at housing outcomes through three connected themes or perspective:

- An **investment and value** perspective asks what outcomes are being prioritised and paid for, who benefits, and over what time horizon.
- An **organisational practice and relationships** perspective asks how decisions are made, by whom, and with what mandate to act on behalf of communities and future occupants.
- A **living systems** perspective asks how a home or neighbourhood sits within the wider flows of energy, water, materials, ecology, skills and information that sustain a place.

Responding effectively therefore requires more than isolated interventions. It requires a broader understanding of value, more collaborative forms of organisational practice, and a deeper appreciation of the relationships and flows that connect people, place and nature.

### What do we mean by regenerative housing?

The term regenerative is increasingly used across the built environment, yet its meaning is interpreted in different ways. For some, it is associated with restoring ecosystems or repairing environmental damage. For others, it relates to strengthening communities, supporting local economies or creating healthier and more resilient places. These perspectives are complementary rather than competing.

This Framework considers regenerative approaches to housing that seek to create the conditions in which people, communities and nature can thrive together over time<sup>2</sup>. They recognise that homes are part of wider living systems and that housing investment influences far more than buildings alone.

A regenerative approach therefore asks how housing can actively contribute to the long-term health of people, places and natural systems. Rather than treating social, environmental and economic outcomes separately, it seeks to understand the relationships between them. Rather than viewing housing as a standalone product, it views homes as part of an evolving process of place-making, stewardship and renewal.

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<sup>2</sup> *Constructivist* sees regenerative design as a system goal: “The goal of regenerative design is for humans and the living world to survive, thrive and co-evolve”.

Regenerative approaches are rooted in context. They recognise that every place has its own history, ecology, culture, assets and challenges. As a result, there is no universal template for regenerative housing. Instead, regenerative practice begins with understanding place, identifying the unique characteristics and relationships that exist within a community or landscape, and building on them over time.

### Stakeholders and language

Regenerative approaches understand places as complex living systems, composed of multiple communities, ecosystems<sup>3</sup>, material resources, and economic conditions. A place-based project engages with this complexity, working with the needs, aspirations and capacities of a wide range of local actors and systems, including funders, insurers, developers, designers, contractors, residents, community groups, public health bodies, training providers and local government.

Within this network, residents are not simply 'end users'. They bring local knowledge, lived experience, emotional connection to place and perspectives that are often under-represented in conventional processes. This includes knowledge of how homes actually feel and perform – if they are warm or cool, comfortable, well-designed and affordable to run – an understanding of local needs, and experience of how spaces are used and cared for over time. Regenerative approaches treat this knowledge as essential to long-term success and the cornerstone of a just transition.<sup>4</sup>

Ecological systems and non-human life are also affected by and benefit from place-based interventions. As such, nature must also be recognised within this wider stakeholder landscape. In practice, this means engaging with local wildlife, conservation and environmental organisations, alongside a shared responsibility to the natural environments in which we live and work.

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<sup>3</sup> An ecosystem is a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and the non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. See Convention on Biological Diversity. Article 2. Use of Terms. [Online] Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/convention/articles/default.shtml?a=cbd-02> [From UKGBC Nature-Positive Framework]

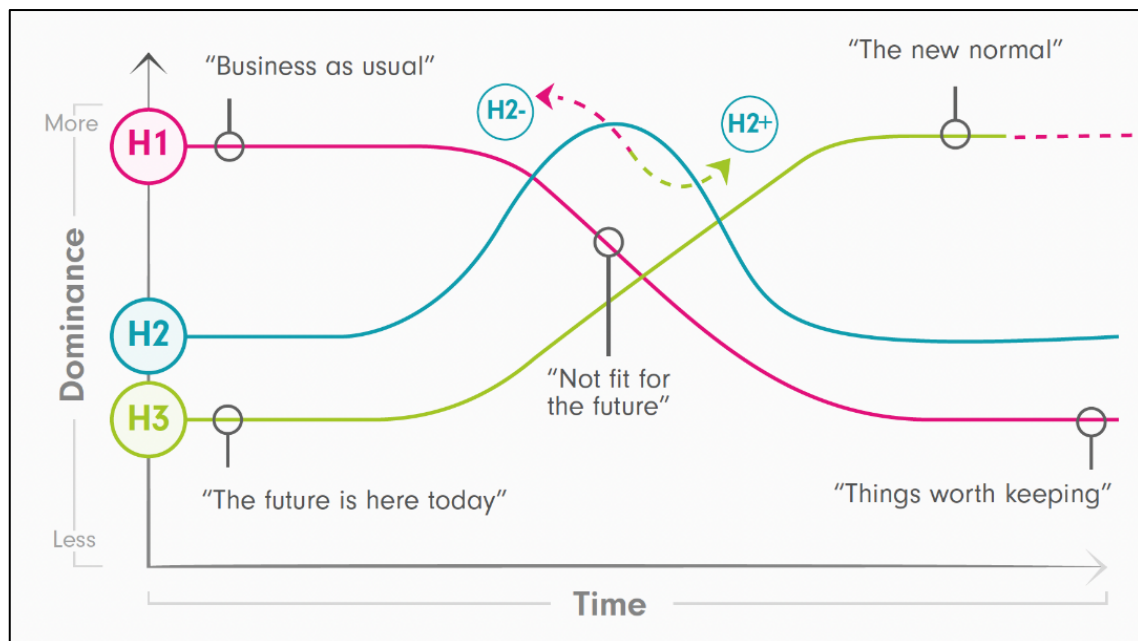
<sup>4</sup> A just transition is a concept of moving to a more sustainable and regenerative economy using approaches that are fair to everyone and reap substantial green economy benefits UKGBC. Glossary. [Online]. Available at: <https://ukgbc.org/about/glossary/>

Because place-based approaches involve such a wide range of actors, language needs to be clear and accessible. This Framework aims to use plain language and define key technical terms so that it can support shared understanding, trust and collaboration from the outset.

### Using the Three Horizons framework

Transforming complex systems is rarely a linear process. Housing systems evolve through changing policies, technologies, business models, cultural norms and patterns of investment. New approaches emerge gradually, often alongside existing practices, before becoming more widely adopted. The Three Horizons framework helps explore this dynamic process of change.

Figure 1: The Three Horizons framework provides a means of structuring how we map progress from current systems to a desirable future.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Three Horizons, A toolkit to help you think and plan for the long term. Available at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/news/future-proofyour-planning-with-easy-to-use-tool/three-horizons-toolkit/three-horizons-toolkit/>

- **Horizon 1: Today's housing system.** The prevailing patterns, assumptions and practices that shape housing today. These systems continue to deliver important outcomes, including homes, investment, employment and infrastructure. However, they may not always be well equipped to adequately respond to emerging social, ecological and economic needs.
- **Horizon 2: Navigating the transition.** The emerging practices, innovations and experiments that exist today. These inform the actions we can take today to move us from our current system to a regenerative future
- **Horizon 3: A regenerative future.** A future in which housing contributes positively to thriving communities, healthy ecosystems and resilient local economies. This is a direction of travel rather than a defined blueprint.

N/B You do not need to be familiar with the Three Horizons model to use this Framework. It is applied here as structure for understanding current practice, the changes already emerging, and the longer-term outcomes regenerative approaches could support.

## PART 1: UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S HOUSING SYSTEM

### Building on today's foundations

The UK housing sector delivers homes, investment, employment and essential infrastructure at a significant scale. Across the country, organisations are working to improve existing homes, deliver new housing, respond to climate targets, enhance environmental performance and support communities.

Business-as-usual practice can result in measurable benefits. Retrofit can lower bills, improve comfort, support health and create jobs. New housing can unlock supply, infrastructure and regeneration. The opportunity is to capture these benefits in combination, and to protect them over time.

Current systems have also been effective at delivering some forms of value, particularly investment, economic activity and regulatory compliance. However, wider outcomes such as long-term wellbeing, ecological recovery, community resilience and stewardship are often harder to capture.

It is helpful to read today's new housing and home retrofit systems through the three themes introduced above. These reveal different aspects of why broader positive social and environmental outcomes are not currently accounted for in a consistent manner:

- Through an **investment and value** lens, the system tends to recognise costs that fall within a single budget, balance sheet or appraisal period more readily than benefits that accrue across organisations or generations. Wider health, ecological and community outcomes are often acknowledged in principle but treated as ancillary rather than as core components of project value.
- Through an **organisational practice and relationships** lens, responsibility is widely distributed but not always coordinated. Decisions about purpose, value, finance and governance are typically made by a small set of actors before others, including residents and ecological interests, are meaningfully involved.
- Through a **living systems** lens, the flows that sustain housing – energy, water, materials, biodiversity, skills, finance and information – are often considered in isolation, or not comprehensively. Effects on those flows beyond the site boundary can be poorly mapped and rarely tracked over time.

### Shared conditions across retrofit and new housing

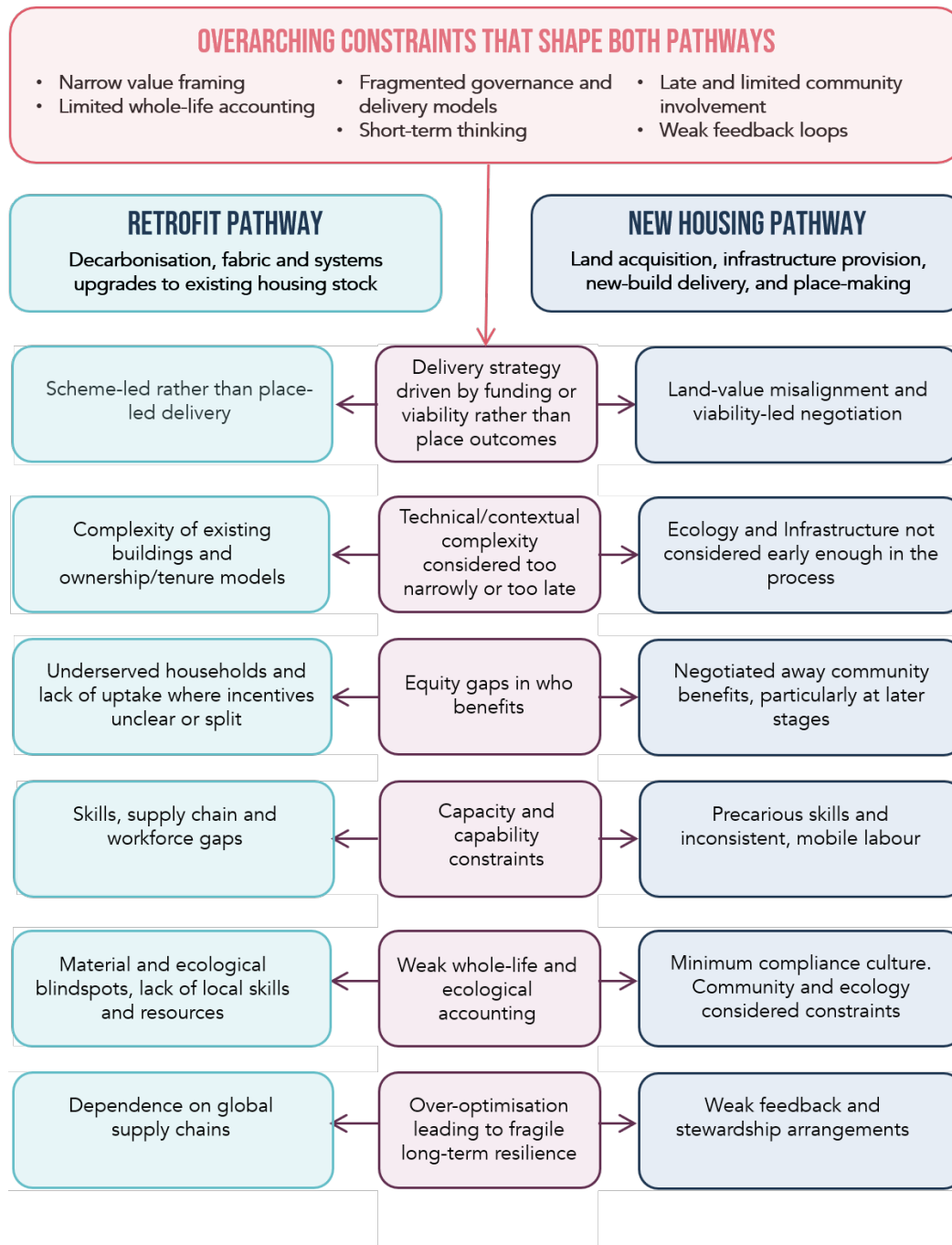
Although retrofit and new housing operate through different delivery models, many of the underlying patterns are similar. Both are often influenced by short-term pressures, fragmented responsibilities and limited definitions of 'value'. Both contain examples of innovation and leadership, alongside structural conditions that make wider change harder to sustain. And both have significant potential to create wider benefits if investment can be aligned more effectively around long-term outcomes.

Several conditions are shared by current approaches to retrofit and new housing:

- **Narrow value framing:** Decisions are often weighted towards cost, compliance, speed and financial return, rather than wider wellbeing, resilience, ecological and community outcomes.
- **Fragmented delivery and governance:** Responsibilities are split across multiple actors, funding streams and programmes, making coordinated place-based action harder to sustain.
- **Late and limited community involvement:** Residents and communities can often be engaged too late, with too little influence over priorities, design, delivery and ongoing maintenance.
- **Weak feedback loops:** Lessons from completed projects are not consistently captured or reused, limiting the ability to improve iteratively.
- **Short-termism:** Funding, policy and commercial cycles favour immediate delivery over long-term stewardship and performance.
- **Limited whole-life accounting:** Social, environmental and health impacts are rarely valued consistently alongside financial metrics.

Many of these are technical constraints. However, these conditions also reflect and sustain shared conceptions of value, organisational practice, and place-based human and living systems.

Figure 2: Constraints shared by both new housing and home retrofit, and how they affect each system



### Retrofit-specific considerations

Retrofit is shaped by the complexity of existing homes, tenure arrangements, funding eligibility and the practical task of coordinating work across occupied buildings. Approaches are necessarily diverse: social housing, private rented homes, owner-occupiers that are able to pay, and households that are unable to pay each follow different pathways, with specific incentives, reporting requirements and thresholds.

This creates a pattern in which homes are upgraded according to scheme eligibility rather than according to the needs and opportunities of the wider place. Delivery can become piecemeal rather than area-based; embodied carbon and ecological effects can be poorly understood; and households that do not fit funding categories can be left behind. The value framework is effectively set by funding rules rather responding to local concerns and aspirations. Further, in a place with diverse ownership, organisational responsibility for retrofitting is rarely held by any one organisation or group.

Retrofit therefore raises strategic questions about fairness, delivery capacity, resident experience, local skills, supply chain resilience and how the benefits of investment can be captured at neighbourhood scale.

### New housing-specific considerations

New housing faces a different but related set of considerations. Projects are often shaped by land value, viability negotiation, project delivery time horizons and value engineering processes that can reduce social and ecological ambition when cost pressures intensify.

The deeper issue is not only one of standards but also of sequence. In the current model, financial parameters often need to be established early in the process, which can make it more difficult to incorporate wider place outcomes later unless they are considered from the outset. Due to this, social infrastructure, green infrastructure, stewardship and community value can be treated as negotiable extras rather than as core components of long-term project performance. The risk is that organisational decisions taken early about land, finance and viability could close off later choices about the living system the homes will sit within.

New housing therefore raises strategic questions about land, viability, infrastructure, design quality, long-term stewardship and whether ecology and community value are shaping decisions early enough.

### Stakeholders and system relationships

Most housing and retrofit projects involve multiple stakeholders, but they do not yet consistently involve the full range of affected parties at the early formative stages, when purpose, value priorities, financial assumptions and delivery models are shaped. Residents, communities, future occupants and wider civic interests can often be engaged later, through consultation or communication, rather than as active contributors to the project’s direction.

A regenerative approach would seek a more inclusive and balanced model of stakeholder involvement from the outset. Civic society brings lived experience, legitimacy and insight into local need; government provides mandate, policy, planning, funding and accountability; and business brings investment, technical capability, delivery capacity and innovation.

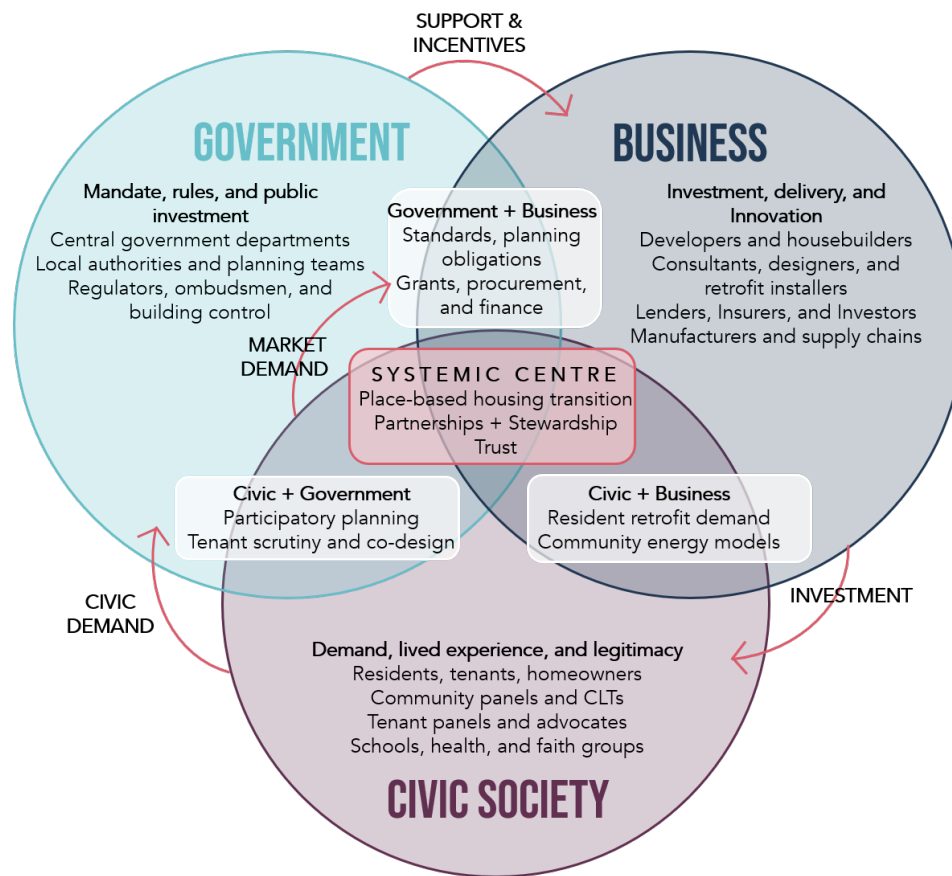


Figure 3. Stakeholders in the new housing and retrofit system, based on Bill Sharpe’s Ambition Loop, in *10 Tools for Systems Change to a Zero Carbon World*.

The aim is not simply to include more voices, but to bring different forms of knowledge, power and responsibility into a more constructive relationship. For both new housing and retrofit, this means moving from stakeholder engagement as a discrete project task to stakeholder governance as an ongoing system function. Stakeholders can be identified early, roles can be made explicit, and mechanisms can support participation, accountability, feedback and stewardship across the life of a place. This is, in essence, a question of organisational practice: who is in the room, with what mandate, and at what point in the decision-making cycle.

#### Consultation questions

- To what extent do you agree that this section accurately reflects your experience as a new build or retrofit practitioner, or both?
- Which stakeholders are most often missing from early decision-making?
- Do you have any other comments on this section?

## PART 2: A REGENERATIVE VISION FOR HOUSING

### Creating the conditions for thriving places

A 'Horizon 3' (see p7) regenerative housing system would understand homes not simply as products to be delivered, but as catalysts for thriving places. It would ask how housing can contribute positively to the health of communities, local economies and natural systems.

Regenerative approaches are shaped by a place's unique local context, history, ecology and culture. The purpose of this vision is to describe a direction of travel: what becomes possible when housing is approached through a broader understanding of value and a deeper appreciation of the relationships that sustain healthy places over time.

In this future, retrofit, new development, and regeneration are no longer treated as separate activities. They are understood as complementary ways of improving the places where people live. Every intervention becomes an opportunity to strengthen the social, environmental and economic foundations upon which future wellbeing depends.

### Places as living systems

At the heart of regenerative thinking is the premise that places are living systems.

They are shaped by continuous flows of people, energy, water, materials, investment, knowledge and care. Relationships evolve over time. Communities adapt. Ecosystems respond to changing conditions. Buildings age, are repaired, repurposed and renewed.

The health of a place depends not only on the quality of individual assets, but on the strength of the relationships between interconnected parts. In a regenerative housing system these relationships become visible. Housing is planned and delivered with an understanding of how decisions influence wider patterns of wellbeing, resilience and ecological health.

### Three themes for regenerative housing

To make the vision practical, it helps to look at housing through our three complementary themes. These provide different perspectives on the same place, and each helps surface questions that the others might miss.

**Living systems and living systems flows.** Human and ecological systems are sustained through interconnected flows that move within and across places over time, including energy, water, materials, biodiversity, skills, finance and information. A regenerative approach seeks to

understand, work with and strengthen these flows so that they reinforce, rather than deplete, the systems they depend on. In housing, this means mapping where carbon, money, resources and capability “leak” out of a place, and where they could instead be retained and circulated. It also means treating nature not as an external constraint but as an active partner in design, governance and stewardship.

**Organisational practice and relationships.** Housing outcomes are shaped by the values, relationships and governance structures that underpin decision-making. A regenerative orientation favours collaboration, stewardship and long-term system health over siloed working and a narrowly compliance-led position. In practice, this means broader and earlier participation, more explicit governance over non-financial commitments, and patient, place-based relationships between residents, providers, local authorities, investors, supply chains and ecological interests. Where current practice often treats engagement as a discrete project task, regenerative practice treats it as an ongoing system function.

**Investment and value.** A regenerative system considers social and environmental value alongside financial value from the outset, not appended at the end of appraisal. It widens the set of beneficiaries that count in an investment case, including residents, future occupants, local economies and ecological systems. It also lengthens the time horizon over which value is judged, recognising avoided costs to public services, retained value within local economies and the long-term resilience of the asset itself. The aim is not to monetise everything, but to make wider value visible and influential at the points where decisions are actually made.

Used together, these perspectives can sharpen the questions asked at each stage of a housing project: *What value are we trying to create, and for whom? Who is making this decision, with what mandate, and in relationship with whom? How does this choice sit within the living systems and flows that sustain the place?*

### What regenerative places make possible

Regenerative housing can support:

- **Thriving communities:** residents are involved early in shaping priorities and solutions; places strengthen belonging, participation and trust.
- **Healthy homes and places:** homes are warm, comfortable and affordable to run; neighbourhoods support wellbeing, safety and access to nature.
- **Nature-positive places:** ecological considerations shape decisions from the earliest stages, and housing contributes to biodiversity, soil health, water management and climate resilience.

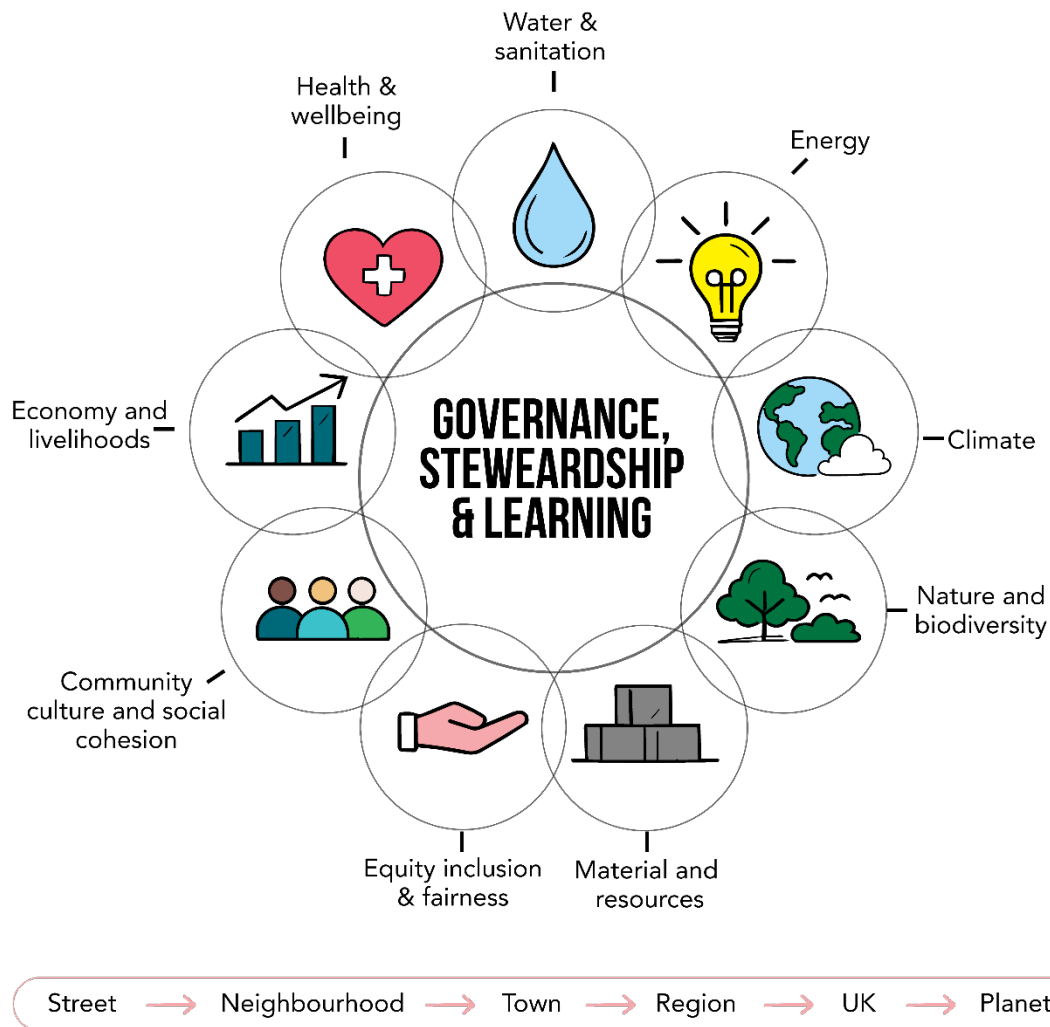
- **Local prosperity and capability:** housing investment strengthens local skills, employment, supply chains, enterprise and community capacity.
- **Circular resources and resilient supply chains:** materials are chosen for longevity, adaptability, circularity and reduced environmental impact.
- **Stewardship and learning:** long-term care, monitoring, feedback and adaptation are built into projects from the outset.

### The Nine Dimensions of Regenerative places

This Framework identifies nine dimensions across which place-based regenerative projects should aim to create positive value (figure 4). Where some approaches extract value or aim to minimise harm, regenerative approaches actively generate positive outcomes and restore the capacity to develop further positive outcomes in future. These are experienced locally within place, while also creating cumulative and interconnected benefits beyond neighbourhood boundaries.

Rather than introducing a new checklist, these nine dimensions are informed by the underlying principles and goals found in established sustainability models and frameworks, including Doughnut Economics 3.0, Bioregional's One Planet Living, Living Future's Living Building Challenge as well as the UK Green Building Council's own work on climate resilience, net zero, nature positive approaches and social value. Taken together, these build a consensus on key forms of value and areas of place-based regenerative impact. (See separate Appendix.)

Figure 4: Dimensions of Place: Regenerative projects create positive outcomes across multiple dimensions and scales.



These dimensions provide a practical way of broadening how place performance is understood. They are not intended as a checklist or accreditation system, but to complement existing certification frameworks. In addition, different places will prioritise different outcomes depending on their context, history and aspirations.

Dimension	Aspects
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical health, mental wellbeing, comfort and safety</li> <li>Indoor and outdoor environments that support human flourishing</li> <li>Reduced exposure to harm; increased access to restorative environments</li> </ul>
Water and sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean, safe, and reliable water for people and ecosystems (living systems)</li> <li>Water cycles that are restorative, efficient, and resilient</li> <li>Sanitation systems that protect health and natural systems</li> </ul>
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renewable and resilient energy systems</li> <li>Increased energy efficiency</li> <li>Energy as an enabler of wellbeing, not a driver of inequality</li> </ul>
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>Adaptation and resilience to climate impacts</li> <li>Long-term carbon thinking across whole lifecycles</li> </ul>
Biodiversity and nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection, restoration, and enhancement of ecosystems</li> <li>Meaningful access to nature for people</li> <li>Places designed to support non-human life</li> </ul>
Materials and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible sourcing, use and reuse of materials</li> <li>Elimination of toxic and harmful substances</li> <li>Circular flows that reduce and eliminate extraction and waste</li> </ul>
Equity, inclusion, and fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair access to benefits and opportunities</li> <li>Attention to who bears costs, risks and harms</li> <li>Respect for inclusion across supply chains and lifecycles</li> </ul>
Community, culture, and social cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong social connections and sense of belonging</li> <li>Respect for local heritage, identity and culture</li> <li>Spaces that enable participation, care and mutual support</li> </ul>
Economy, innovation and livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for local economies and skills</li> <li>Long-term value creation over extraction</li> <li>Economic systems that serve people, place and future generations</li> </ul>
Cross-cutting principle	
Governance, stewardship and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparent and accountable decision-making</li> <li>Long-term care, management and adaptation</li> <li>Capacity to learn, respond and improve over time</li> </ul>

### Consultation questions

- To what extent do you agree that this section reflects a 'North Star'<sup>6</sup> ambition for the built environment sector?
- Looking at the Dimensions of Place, which dimensions are easiest for organisations to act on now?
- Which dimensions are hardest to integrate into current decision-making?
- Do you have any other comments on this section?

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<sup>6</sup> The term 'North Star' is used as a metaphor for a guiding direction of travel, rather than a fixed target or compliance measure.

## PART 3: NAVIGATING THE TRANSITION

The transition to regenerative housing is not a leap from one system to another, but a process – one that is already underway. Housing providers are experimenting with neighbourhood-scale retrofit; developers are exploring nature-positive approaches; communities are taking a more active role in shaping local places; local authorities are testing new forms of partnership working; and investors are beginning to consider wider forms of value alongside traditional financial metrics. These are the ‘Horizon 2’ (see p6) emerging signals of change that can inform how we enable regenerative places from within our current system.

The purpose of this section is to explore practical transitions that can help bridge the gap between current realities and future aspirations. These are framed through six key transitions and through indicative regenerative pathways (p24).

### KEY TRANSITIONS

Figure 5: Six key transitions

Narrow value	→	Whole place value
Project completion	→	Long term stewardship
Consultation	→	Participation
Delivery capacity	→	Place capability
Managing nature	→	Working with nature
Fragmented decisions	→	Shared outcomes

#### Transition 1: From narrow value to whole-place value

Housing investment creates many forms of value. It can improve health and wellbeing, reduce energy costs, strengthen local economies, increase resilience to climate change, support biodiversity and foster stronger communities. Yet many of these benefits emerge over long periods of time and across organisational boundaries.

To transition to more regenerative ways of working, organisations will need to define intended outcomes before viability assumptions are fixed. This means starting with a broader account of value, naming intended beneficiaries early – including future residents and ecological interests – and considering how financial, social, ecological and public value can reinforce one another.

### Transition 2: From project completion to enabling stewardship

Housing systems are often organised around projects, with budgets, milestones and completion dates. However, places are not static, but evolve over years and decades. Indeed, many of the outcomes that matter most depend on what happens after practical completion.

Regenerative approaches place greater emphasis on stewardship from the outset. This includes governance, funding, maintenance, community involvement and its resourcing, monitoring and adaptation. This is a transition from completion being seen as the end of value creation, to ways of working that establish ongoing accountability.

### Transition 3: From consultation to participation

People experience places in ways that plans, models and datasets cannot fully capture. As experts in their local places, residents understand how neighbourhoods function in everyday life, where people gather, what makes places feel welcoming, where challenges exist and how conditions change over time.

Many organisations are already investing in engagement and participation. However, involvement often occurs after key decisions have been made, when opportunities for influence are limited. A regenerative approach recognises communities not simply as consultees or end users, but as participants, long-term stakeholders or ‘commitment holders’<sup>7</sup> in understanding, shaping and stewarding place.

### Transition 4: From delivery capacity to place capability

The housing sector often focuses on capacity in terms of labour, workforce and delivery processes. While these remain important, thriving places also depend on developing local skills, building relationships, engaged institutions, local leadership, social networks and the ability of communities and local economies to adapt and respond to change.

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<sup>7</sup> The term ‘commitment-holders’ is an emerging descriptor used to emphasise active responsibility and accountability, rather than passive stake-holding. It reflects wider usage in collaborative contexts where actors are identified by the commitments they make.

To transition from business as usual to regenerative ways of working means understanding not only what is being delivered, but what capacity is being created in the process. Housing investment can strengthen local skills, support social enterprises, build trust, retain knowledge and develop the institutional capacity. Skills, in this view, are part of the living system of a place, sustained, lost or grown through the projects that pass through it.

#### Transition 5: From managing nature to working with nature

Nature is often considered through the lens of mitigation, compliance or risk management. Regenerative approaches invite a broader perspective. They recognise that healthy ecosystems underpin healthy communities, resilient economies and a stable climate.

This means seeing nature not as an external constraint, but as a fundamental partner in creating thriving places. Ecological objectives can influence decisions from the earliest stages, and can be carried through design, delivery, management and long-term stewardship. In organisational terms, this can mean giving ecological interests a structural place or 'voice' in governance, rather than a late-stage consultative role.

#### Transition 6: From fragmented decisions to shared outcomes

Housing outcomes are shaped by many actors. Government departments, local authorities, housing providers, developers, investors, infrastructure providers, community organisations and residents all influence how places evolve over time. No single organisation controls health, biodiversity, climate resilience, economic development and housing delivery simultaneously.

Rather than eliminating complexity, transitioning to regenerative ways of working means encouraging stronger relationships, clearer shared ambitions and greater alignment between decisions and commitment-holders that influence the same places.

#### Case study: Inner Development Goals

The Inner Development Goals (IDG) framework highlights that the quality of outcomes in regenerative projects is shaped by the capabilities and mindsets of the people delivering them. Where teams invest in developing skills such as reflection, empathy, and systems thinking, they are better able to work with place, respond to complexity, and collaborate effectively. In contrast, where these capabilities are absent, projects may meet technical performance targets but struggle to deliver lasting social or ecological value. The framework suggests that strengthening individual and organisational capacity is a necessary complement to technical and policy interventions, helping ensure that regenerative ambitions are realised in practice.

## PATHWAYS TO REGENERATIVE PLACES

In this section, possible regenerative actions have been mapped onto recognisable project stages, from place readiness and strategic definition through to briefing, concept design, delivery, handover and in-use learning. The six transitions described above are enabled through specific decisions made at different points in the process

Crucially, the most significant changes to current ways of working are in the earliest stages, when value is defined, beneficiaries are identified, governance is established and the basic relationship between viability and outcomes is set. Each of these relies on a deep understanding of place.

Figure 6. System diagram for a place-based regenerative approach to housing

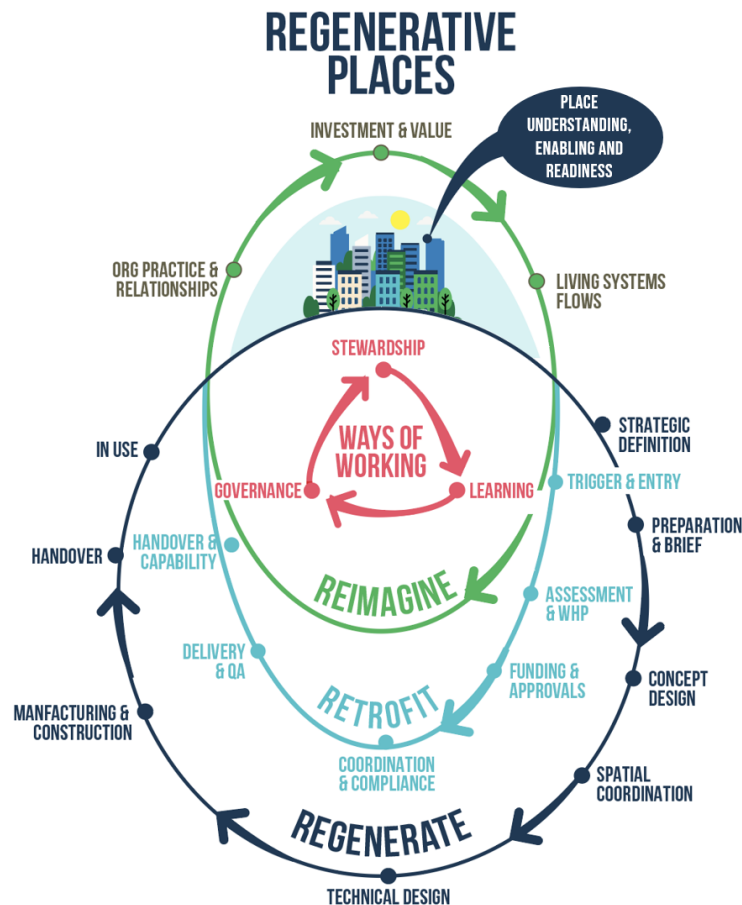


Figure 7: Stage overview of a regenerative approach to housing

Stage	Description
0: Place understanding, enabling and readiness	Agree place outcomes, governance, capacity, data and investment conditions so interventions can deliver long-term value.
1–3: Strategic definition, preparation and brief, concept design	Identify needs and opportunities across homes, streets, services and nature; select the delivery pathway, partners and finance model; establish the baseline and a shared brief setting performance, risk and equity outcomes.
4–6: Spatial coordination, technical design, manufacturing and construction	Develop and compare options; commit to the preferred investment and delivery plan; coordinate technical design, standards, phasing and compliance; and deliver the works with quality assurance and evidence capture.
7–8: Handover and in use	Commission systems; support residents and operators to use and maintain outcomes; monitor performance over time; and feed learning back into future projects and place-based decision-making.

## STAGE 0: PLACE UNDERSTANDING AND READINESS

Before land purchase, funding application or brief-writing, organisations can establish a multi-capital<sup>8</sup> value framework, identify intended beneficiaries (including future residents and non-human interests), and create governance structures that include community and ecological

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<sup>8</sup> Definition of multi-capital: Multi-capital means recognising that value is created, held and affected across different forms of capital, not only financial capital. These can include social, natural, human, cultural, manufactured and relational capital, all of which shape the long-term health and resilience of a place. See also <https://www.forumforthefuture.org/the-five-capitals>

voices. Reversing the usual sequence so that value definition precedes financial fixing is one of the most important shifts available within current systems. Stewardship, participation and nature recovery are integrated from the very beginning.

- *Investment and value*: agree the value framework, capital types, intended outcomes and beneficiaries upfront, before viability assessment begins; use place-based outcome frameworks and multi-capital baselines to make wider value visible.
- *Organisational practice*: set governance arrangements that give communities and ecological interests a meaningful role from the outset, including routes for early participation and partnership building
- *Living systems*: map the bioregional context, including energy, water and materials, as well as skills flows that already shape the place.

While no single project can be definitively described as 'regenerative', the case studies in this section show how more regenerative practices are already emerging within current practice:

#### Case study: Alternative value frameworks

Meridian Water is a 10,000-home regeneration programme in Enfield delivering new housing, infrastructure, jobs and public space over a 20–25 year period. Applying Doughnut Economics and developed in partnership with UKGBC and EIT Climate KIC, the scheme embeds environmental, social and economic priorities into its masterplanning approach, including carbon, biodiversity and circular design strategies. This supports long-term value creation through improved health, local employment, and ecological outcomes<sup>9</sup>

#### Case study: Nature-based planning

H2020 Connecting Nature is a European programme delivering nature-based solutions across cities including Glasgow, working with local authorities, communities, industry and research partners. It integrates ecological systems into urban development through cross-sector collaboration and structured approaches to delivery and impact assessment. This supports biodiversity, climate resilience, health and wellbeing, and more sustainable local economic development.

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<sup>9</sup> UKGBC Foreground project details: <https://ukgbc.org/news/foreground-meridian-water-radical-new-thinking-for-a-new-generation-of-development-schemes/>

#### Case study: Local Area Retrofit Accelerator

The Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (LARA), led by the MCS Foundation with partners including UKGBC, supports local areas to develop place-based Local Retrofit Strategies. Working across Hertfordshire, Surrey, Liverpool City Region and the East Midlands Combined Counties, LARA uses systems mapping, stakeholder workshops and collaborative action planning to unlock retrofit delivery while generating wider benefits for health, jobs, skills, affordability and community resilience.

### STAGES 1 TO 3: STRATEGIC DEFINITION, BRIEF AND CONCEPT DESIGN

At strategic definition, place-based evidence across the nine dimensions can guide investment decisions. At briefing, financing models can be chosen that recognise wider value streams, including blended finance, patient capital, social impact investment and community ownership structures. At concept stage, options can be evaluated across multiple forms of value rather than financial metrics alone. Here, housing investment can be linked to wider outcomes including health, social equity, resilience, local economic benefit, and nature recovery.

- *Investment and value*: appraise options against a multi-capital baseline; make non-financial commitments contractually visible, not advisory. Investment decisions are here linked to wider public outcomes.
- *Organisational practice*: bring residents, local authorities, ecological advisors and delivery partners into shared briefing and option-development work, using co-design and community partnership models rather than sequential review.
- *Living systems*: design infrastructure, landscape and buildings to support local resource flows, ecological function and climate resilience; identify where flows of carbon, money, resources and skills can be retained within the place. Use planning policy, planning conditions and Section 106 agreements to link material choices with local supply chains, training provision and skills development.

#### Case study: Retrofit Credits

Retrofit Credits, developed by HACT and PNZ Carbon, convert verified carbon reductions and social value from retrofit projects into tradable units. This creates new revenue streams for housing providers, enabling reinvestment into further retrofit and supporting a cycle of ongoing improvement. The model demonstrates how financial value can be attached to environmental and social outcomes, helping to keep investment

circulating within communities. As of 2024, the programme had already enabled improvements to over 16,600 homes, delivering more than 15,000 tonnes of annualised carbon reduction and generating approximately £8.75 million in social value benefits every year.

#### Case study: Community-led retrofit models

Net Zero Terrace Streets<sup>10</sup> is an Innovate UK–supported project developing a community-based retrofit model for terraced housing, combining whole-street upgrades with shared heat infrastructure. It explores how retrofit can be organised at neighbourhood scale through local coordination and resident participation. This approach aims to reduce carbon emissions while improving affordability, building local skills, and retaining economic value within communities.

#### Case study: North Essex garden community

Tendingr Colchester Borders Garden Community is a proposed new settlement east of Colchester, led by Latimer, with plans for up to 7,750 homes across three walkable neighbourhoods. The proposals integrate affordable homes, schools, health hubs, jobs, transport infrastructure and extensive open space into the masterplan. This demonstrates how early strategic planning can align housing growth with social, environmental and economic infrastructure.

## STAGES 4 TO 6: TECHNICAL DESIGN, PROCUREMENT AND DELIVERY

Later project stages can be vulnerable to dilution through cost pressure and value engineering. Non-financial commitments can be protected through governance, contracts and procurement, with explicit trade-off analysis required before social or ecological outcomes are reduced. Procurement is a critical lever because it can shape markets, build supply chains, connect ambition with capability and strengthen local skills.

- *Investment and value*: require sign-off against the value framework, not only cost, for any change that reduces social or ecological performance. Explore “Design for Values”

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<sup>10</sup> Design for Values is an approach that integrates values such as justice, sustainability and wellbeing throughout the design process, using explicit, inclusive and transparent methods to shape both decisions and outcomes. See: <https://delftdesignforvalues.nl/what-is-design-for-values/>

approaches to protect the elements with the greatest contribution to long-term place outcomes.

- *Organisational practice*: maintain transparent decision logs; keep community and ecological representatives in the room when trade-offs are negotiated; ensure supply chain partners are accountable for social and ecological outcomes, not only cost and quality.
- *Living systems*: use procurement to grow local supply chains, support biobased and circular materials, strengthen skills and social enterprises, and protect ecological function during construction.

#### Case study: Place-based low-carbon energy

Bristol City Leap<sup>11</sup> is a city-scale partnership delivering low-carbon energy infrastructure across Bristol, including heat networks and renewable generation. It coordinates investment and delivery across the city to support a more integrated energy system. This reduces emissions while supporting local employment, improving energy resilience, and helping to manage long-term energy costs.

## STAGES 7 AND 8: HANDOVER, STEWARDSHIP AND LEARNING

Handover can include performance monitoring frameworks, resident and operator capability-building, and funding for stewardship, rather than simply the transfer of built assets. In-use monitoring can feed evidence back into future investment decisions, creating a learning loop through which regenerative propositions become more robust over time.

- *Investment and value*: fund stewardship from the value created at development stage, rather than treating it as a residual or an afterthought. Use evidence on health, resilience and local economic benefits to inform future investment.
- *Organisational practice*: equip residents, operators and community partners with the capability and resources to maintain outcomes; share learning openly across the sector.
- *Living systems*: monitor and report long-term performance across the Nine Dimensions (see p18); allow evidence about how the place is actually 'living' to shape future investment. Communication and information flows should make performance, trade-offs and learning visible over time, including both successes and failures.

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<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.bristolcityleap.co.uk/>

**Case study: Retrofit Balsall Heath - neighbourhood stewardship through retrofit**

Retrofit Balsall Heath is a community-led neighbourhood retrofit initiative in Birmingham, developed around a 20-year vision for climate action, housing improvement and local regeneration. Working through resident networks, faith groups and community organisations, it combines whole-street retrofit, neighbourhood greening, skills development and participatory governance, positioning residents as active stewards rather than the 'recipients' of retrofit.

**Case study: Feering – Community led masterplan**

Commissioned by The Crown Estate, the 835-home masterplan for Feering, Essex, used 'community immersion' and regular design panels to shape development before design decisions were fixed. Through more than 40 meetings with residents, local groups and businesses, the project includes a landscape-led strategy for green space, biodiversity, infrastructure, community facilities and stewardship, demonstrating how participation can support more place-specific outcomes.

**Consultation questions**

- What extent do you agree with the propositions set out in this section?
- Which transitions are already emerging in practice?
- Which transitions are hardest to pursue within current systems?
- What examples, tools or partnerships could help make these approaches more mainstream?
- Where are the most important intervention points in current project processes?
- What decisions are currently made too early, too narrowly or by too few people?
- How can regenerative outcomes be protected as projects move from vision to delivery?

## PART 4: CREATING THE ENABLING CONDITIONS

### FIRST STEPS AN ORGANISATION CAN TAKE

The following actions can be taken by organisations within current practice without waiting for policy change, new financial structures, or sector-wide agreement on metrics.

- Start with the value framework, not the viability assessment. Before commissioning any appraisal, agree with all stakeholders what outcomes the investment is intended to create across all nine dimensions of place value (see p17). This should be grounded in a deep understanding of each place: what is there, how does it flows, and who do relationships need to be built with?
- Name all beneficiaries from the outset including communities, future residents, and ecological systems and ensure they have representation in investment governance structures.
- Adopt multi-capital baseline assessment as standard practice. Use available open data on health, ecology, socio-economic conditions, and built environment performance.
- Contractually protect non-financial value commitments from Stage 3 onwards. Require explicit trade-off analysis and governance sign-off before any reduction in social or ecological performance standards.
- Include stewardship investment in development business cases. Fund long-term maintenance of ecological systems, community infrastructure, and building performance.
- Measure and report long-term performance. Commit to monitoring outcomes across the full value framework for at least five years post-occupancy, and share evidence with the sector.
- Engage with emerging integrating frameworks such as this one for aligning financial, social, and ecological value in investment decision-making.
- Build translation capacity within organisations. Develop the ability to articulate regenerative value to different stakeholders including investors, communities, planners, ecologists. Use terms that are relevant to each, without reducing the integrity of what is valued.

## POLICIES TO ENABLE REGENERATIVE PLACES

Regulation in the built environment can be viewed as a constraint: something to navigate, comply with, get around or overcome. It sets minimum standards, defines viability, and in some cases becomes the point at which ambition is negotiated down. Yet the policy environment is one of the most powerful tools we have to shape the conditions in which decisions are made and outcomes are delivered. Government policy influences what is valued, what is possible, and ultimately, what gets built or retrofitted.

The changes to regulation in recent years – such as tightening of building regulations, reforming planning frameworks, and introducing new environmental requirements – have been well-intentioned, but more can be done to enable better outcomes for both people and nature. We have achieved important progress with the gradual, incremental uplift in requirements, but have not yet catalysed a system that consistently delivers homes and places where communities and nature can thrive.

In this sense, policy can be progressed further to act as a force that produces positive outcomes for both people and the rest of nature every time, not just in one off exemplar projects (important as those are to trial innovations).

A key issue is that policy can sometimes operate as a series of small, incremental adjustments within a wider system that remains misaligned with long-term social, economic and ecological flourishing.

### What might a more regenerative policy system look like?

This Framework points towards the need for a shift from policy that manages harm, to policy that actively enables restoration and resilience. But this shift cannot happen overnight and nor should it. Policy, by its nature, must keep one foot grounded in the current system to ensure continuity. Using the three horizons framework enables us to explore the changes needed to achieve this shift while acknowledging that overhauling a whole system takes time.

It is also important to remember that policy is only one lever in the current system, albeit an important one. It cannot be expected to 'solve' this issue alone. It must work alongside shifts in finance, culture, skills, and governance. However, it can play a critical role in setting direction, aligning incentives, and creating the conditions for change.

## Horizon 1: A system that delivers narrow value creation within project timeframes

Built environment policy is currently not enabling widespread regenerative outcomes.

Some insights into the current approach:

### 1. Short-term horizons

Government operates within political and fiscal cycles that prioritise the near term. Investment decisions, regulatory changes and policy priorities are often tied to electoral timelines of 4-5 years. This makes it difficult to sustain the longer-term strategies needed to address complex challenges such as climate adaptation, ecological restoration, or community resilience, all of which require consistent attention over decades.

### 2. An adversarial cycle

Built environment policy is frequently forged through a tension between competing positions: actors push for stronger regulation; industry raises concerns around cost, feasibility and delivery; government mediates between the two. These dynamics are further shaped by a system that focuses more on short-term financial returns than on longer term outcomes.

### 3. Limited collaboration and public voice

Civil society voices are largely absent from the policy development process, and as a result policy can miss opportunities to draw on local knowledge, capacity and agency. Furthermore, even for industry, wide consultation with those who will be affected often happens relatively late in the process. This means that by the time policy proposals are shared, there is limited scope for collective problem-solving, and policies can be disconnected from the realities of delivery, or from what communities actually want and need.

Together, these dynamics mean policy tends to focus on tightening minimum standards which incrementally improve performance, but rarely deliver change at the scale needed to reshape the system itself.

## Horizon 2: Glimpses of a different approach

Horizon 2 creates space for experimentation and transition within the current system. Further examples for how this might be done could include:

- Developing clear transition pathways, co-created between government, industry and communities, that set direction while allowing flexibility in how outcomes are achieved
- Enabling local experimentation, for example through “regenerative zones” within local plans, where new models of development, ownership and stewardship can be tested
- Using planning tools, such as design codes and planning gain mechanisms, to embed expectations around whole-place outcomes, including nature, health and social infrastructure
- Building regulations evolving to consider whole-life and system impacts, including embodied carbon, embodied ecological impacts, circularity, and adaptability
- Supporting area-based retrofit strategies that connect housing improvements to wider social, economic and environmental outcomes

There are growing examples of policy being used differently, offering glimpses of what a more regenerative approach could look like within the current policy system. One such example is the UK's Zero Carbon Homes 2016 trajectory (in place from 2006-2015). This approach set a clear long-term goal, alongside a defined pathway of increasing standards over a significant time period. It was underpinned by sustained collaboration between government and industry through the Zero Carbon Hub, enabling shared ownership of delivery and resilience of policy. Arguably one limiting factor was lack of wider public engagement, which ultimately meant the policy commitment could be withdrawn without much concern of a public backlash in 2015 (with a change of government post-election). This example provides a lesson in the importance of building broader societal support to hold governments to account and sustain ambition over time, as well as demonstrating the power of consistency and co-creation.

Elsewhere, more place-based and community-led approaches are beginning to emerge:

- Hastings Commons is bringing derelict buildings back into use as affordable homes, workspaces and shared community assets. Its model of “commoning” reframes ownership and stewardship around long-term collective benefit.

- One Planet Development in Wales enables low-impact homes and livelihoods in the open countryside. Residents must meet a significant share of their needs from the land within five years, linking planning policy to place-based experimentation.
- Lammas Eco Village in Pembrokeshire is one of the best-known One Planet Development examples. Nine smallholdings were created on degraded agricultural land, using natural materials, restoring habitats and supporting community skill-sharing.
- Newham's Citizens' Assembly, launched in 2021, gives residents an ongoing role in shaping local priorities. Proposals have included improving parks, increasing biodiversity, supporting local spaces and improving housing energy efficiency.
- Firs and Bromford Neighbours Together is a resident-led Big Local partnership near Birmingham. Over ten years, it built social connection before delivering physical improvements, including two connected village centres.

While no one project can be seen as definitely 'regenerative', these examples illustrate that more regenerative practices are possible within the current system. These are not endpoints but starting points: small scale regenerative approaches which 'bet the field, not the farm', trialling new approaches and allowing innovation to emerge.

### Horizon 3: Towards a regenerative policy system

A truly regenerative policy system would be different from today's in both purpose and practice. We suggest it would be:

- Long-term, with clear multi-decade strategies that transcend political cycles and align investment with long-term outcomes.
- Collaborative by design, shifting from adversarial consultation to shared problem-solving, bringing together government, industry, communities and civil society as partners in shaping policy and places.
- Enabling rather than constraining, creating the conditions for innovation, experimentation and new delivery models to flourish.
- Deeply place-based, recognising that thriving places cannot be designed from Westminster alone, but must be facilitated from 'the top' to allow the emergence of 'bottom-up' strategies from the knowledge, needs and aspirations of the people who live there.

It would also require a rethinking of value within government, aligning fiscal systems, investment models and appraisal frameworks with long-term social and ecological outcomes, so that regenerative ambition is maintained throughout a project lifecycle.

Central to this vision is a shift in the role of government from directing outcomes to enabling and unlocking local action. Across the country, there is untapped capacity within communities to drive positive change: community energy groups, local regeneration initiatives, and grassroots organisations are already demonstrating what is possible, but often face barriers in accessing finance, navigating regulation, or scaling their impact.

A regenerative policy system would seek to remove these barriers and actively support these actors, recognising that lasting change will come not only from top-down direction, but from distributed, bottom-up approaches.

Local authorities have a particularly important role because they sit close to place. They can connect housing, planning, climate, health, nature recovery, economic development and community priorities in ways that national policy or individual projects often cannot. Even where local authorities do not control all the funding or delivery levers, they can help convene shared outcomes, align partners around place-based priorities, and make visible the wider forms of value that housing and retrofit can create.

A regenerative approach would encourage local authorities to act not only as regulators or consultees, but as place stewards and system convenors. This means helping different actors work towards shared outcomes over time: residents and community organisations, developers, housing providers, landowners, investors, infrastructure providers, local businesses, health partners and environmental groups. It also means creating space for local experimentation, learning and adaptation, rather than assuming a single model will work everywhere.

Understanding how policy can evolve to support a system that consistently enables places to become more regenerative over time will require experimentation, collaboration and leadership across all levels of the system, but another world is already on the way.

## CHARTER

The Charter sets out a shared way of working for those applying the Regenerative Places Framework. It is intended to be used from the outset of projects or collaborations, to support a common understanding of the behaviours, mindsets and relationships needed to work regeneratively in practice. It offers several guiding principles to help individuals, teams and organisations commit to collaborating and making decisions with purpose, staying open to learning, valuing different forms of knowledge, and taking shared responsibility for the places and systems they help shape.

### Regenerative Places Charter: Ways of Working

- 1. Act with purpose and intent**  
Recognise that meaningful change is shaped through everyday decisions, meeting by meeting, project by project, place by place.
- 2. Value all voices and relationships**  
Work with humility, fairness and transparency, building trust and recognising that no one has all the answers.
- 3. Stay curious and open to change**  
Create space for “what if?” and “why not?”, and be willing to question established norms and assumptions.
- 4. Think systemically, with nature and future generations in mind**  
Consider long-term impacts, living systems and what those who come after us would need, value and inherit.
- 5. Share responsibility and lead by example**  
Act as stewards of the process, outcomes and learning, modelling the behaviours and practices we seek to embed across the sector.

### Consultation questions

- To what extent do you agree with the organisational actions proposed?
- What actions might communities and civil society take to encourage these approaches?
- To what extent do you agree with the policy shifts set out in this section?
- Do you have suggestions for the policy shifts needed at local or national level?
- To what extent do you agree with the principles proposed in the Charter?

## CLOSING REFLECTION

A regenerative approach is not just an upgraded sustainability agenda, but a proposition for re-examining the underlying assumptions through which the sector defines value, allocates risk and understands success. It asks whether homes and neighbourhoods are best understood only by what they deliver at completion, or by how they strengthen the capacity of a place to support life over time.

At its core, regenerative housing is about three connected shifts: redefining what counts as value in housing investment, reshaping the organisational practice and relationships through which housing decisions are made, and learning to work with places as living systems rather than as sites. These shifts reinforce one another. A wider account of value invites different organisational relationships; different relationships make living systems visible; attending to living systems, in turn, surfaces forms of value that the current system finds hard to see, and therefore does not account for.

The sector is unlikely to be served by an abstract vision detached from delivery, or by a narrow framework confined to compliance. It needs a practical but ambitious account of how development and retrofit can create broader forms of value in a period of structural uncertainty.

That is the role this Framework can play. It is intended to be disciplined enough to be useful, open enough to invite contribution, and ambitious enough to signal that a different model of housing and place-making is not only desirable, but increasingly necessary.

It is the story of the future that we hope future generations will value.

## Questions for further reflection and dialogue

### For policymakers

- How might policy create greater certainty for long-term investment in regenerative outcomes?
- Which existing rules, funding streams or accountability structures reinforce fragmentation?
- How can policy better align housing, health, climate, nature and local economic outcomes?

### For local authorities

- What role can local authorities play in convening shared place outcomes?
- How can planning, procurement and local investment support regenerative approaches?
- What capacity is needed locally to support long-term stewardship and learning?

### For housing providers

- How can retrofit and asset management strategies strengthen wider place outcomes?
- What role can residents play in shaping priorities, monitoring outcomes and stewarding places?
- How can social and ecological value be protected through business planning?

### For developers and delivery partners

- How can wider place value be defined before viability assumptions become fixed?
- What forms of procurement and partnership can protect regenerative ambition through delivery?
- How can supply chains support local capability, circularity and ecological recovery?

### For investors and funders

- What evidence would help make long-term place value more investable?
- How can investment structures recognise resilience, stewardship and avoided social or environmental cost?
- What risks arise from continuing to undervalue social and ecological outcomes?

### For communities and civil society

- What forms of knowledge are currently underused in housing and retrofit decisions?
- What would meaningful participation look like in different contexts?
- How can communities be supported to shape and steward places over time?

### Contributing to the consultation

We welcome feedback on the ideas, assumptions, language and examples presented throughout the document. We are particularly interested in areas where perspectives differ, where tensions remain unresolved and where promising approaches are emerging in practice.

Responses could address:

- Which parts of the Framework feel most useful.
- Which parts need further evidence, clarification or testing.
- Whether the language is accessible to different audiences.
- Where examples of emerging practice could be included.
- What additional voices, sectors or forms of expertise could inform the next iteration.

This Framework draws on other valuable research and collaboration into place-based and regenerative approaches taking place across the sector, and aims to recognise and complement this work. This includes but is not limited to:

- Bioregional | One Planet Living
- BREEAM Standards
- The Constructivist Regenerative Design Lab
- Doughnut Economics Action Lab
- Living Future Europe | Living Building Challenge
- National Retrofit Hub | Retrofit Connect
- The Regenerative Architecture Index
- UK Architects Declare Regenerative Design Primer
- UKGBC programmes, including Systems Change, Leadership, and Industry Transformation

With thanks to Task Group contributors: Architects Declare, Arup, Atelier Ten, Be First, BRE, Buro Happold, Chapmans BDS, Clarion Housing Group, Collaborate CIC, Community Energy England, Deloitte, Earls Court Development Company, Eight Versa, Elliott Wood, Essex County Council, Expedition, Grimshaw, Haworth Tompkins, Hilson Moran, Hoare Lea, Igloo, Lambert Smith Hampton, Living Future Europe, Lloyds Banking Group, Morgan Sindall, Muse, Okana, Pamphilon Architects, Ramboll, Ridge, Ryder Architecture, Savills Earth, Stride Treglown, Troup Bywaters + Anders, Westminster City Council, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

We also thank all those who joined our series of Collaboration Cafes in Bristol, Edinburgh, London, and Manchester.

This report does not necessarily reflect the position of individual organisations.