



East Midlands Combined Counties Retrofit Strategy

2025-2028



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1. Forewords

East Midlands Combined County Authority's (EMCCA) very first capital funding commitment to be delivered in full was £9.92m that was spent on domestic energy efficiency and low carbon generation retrofit activities within our region.

All of the 17 local authorities in the East Midlands were involved, and together we delivered a place-based project that was focused on making homes in the region more efficient, healthier, and cheaper to heat and power. All of the project's goals were overachieved, including 574 homes reaching an energy efficiency rating of at least EPC C and 837 measures being installed.

Working together with partners and local authorities, our mission is to make the East Midlands the best place to live, to work, and to learn.

Uncertainty about energy bills and cold homes have been unnecessary issues for residents in the East Midlands for too long. Improving people's homes to make them warmer in winter while reducing energy bills helps to deliver this mission.

Fuel poverty currently contributes to around 155 excess winter deaths across EMCCA annually. Retrofitting people's homes will help reduce this alongside reducing health inequalities and reducing absences from school and work.

It is estimated that every £1 invested in housing brings £2 of benefit through costs avoided to public services including care, health, and crime costs.¹

Local authorities in the EMCCA region have a strong track record of retrofit delivery and EMCCA is ready to support the region to build on this and ensure the region continues to demonstrate leadership in delivering domestic energy efficiency projects and programmes.

While there is a good track record of delivering domestic retrofit programmes in our region, there are many barriers to support people to retrofit their homes. Our ambition is to enable the delivery of retrofit projects at scale, working with partners to ensure the delivery of at least 12,000 retrofitted homes over the next ten years.

The East Midlands Combined Counties Local Retrofit Strategy is a catalyst for action, not just on home energy efficiency, but for building a more resilient, prosperous, and inclusive region.

This Local Retrofit Strategy sets out a place-based roadmap that EMCCA will deliver alongside partners in the region. Our approach will work across six pillars: community, skills and training, homes, low carbon technology, financial resourcing, and governance.

But targets and strategies are not enough to deliver lasting change. We are beginning work with partners to accelerate progress on retrofitting homes in the East Midlands now. The East Midlands Combined County Authority is ready to lead a collaborative approach to energy efficiency projects that deliver real benefits for communities, the local economy, and the environment.

Michael Gallagher, Director of Climate Resilience and Green Growth

¹ The Health Foundation, 2018

2. Executive Summary

The East Midlands Combined Counties (EMCC) Local Retrofit Strategy sets out a systems-led, place-based roadmap to accelerate home retrofit. This will support the reduction of fuel poverty, improve the quality of local housing, and increase environmental sustainability across the EMCC region. Developed through the Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (LARA) Pilot, this strategy unites a range of local stakeholders around a shared understanding of the need to reduce fuel poverty, delivering local economic and social benefits, and cutting emissions from heating and cooling homes. The EMCC is one of four 'localities' that participated in the LARA Pilot, convened by the MCS Foundation.

Tackling home retrofit at scale demands more than isolated projects, it requires systemic change. Our approach takes a whole-system view across six pillars: community, skills and training, homes, low carbon technology, financial resourcing and governance. It recognises that stakeholders need to collaborate and coordinate to create lasting, scalable impact. It is grounded in the unique characteristics and challenges of the East Midlands as a region, leveraging the expertise and energy of local partners while aligning with national net zero ambitions.

Between February and July 2025, over 58 organisations collaborated through a structured co-design process involving workshops, working groups, and stakeholder interviews. This included representation from local authorities, community groups, supply chain, social landlords, training providers, financial sector, and national partners.

Together, they developed a shared vision and mission, agreed principles, determined strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to accelerating retrofit in the region, and developed a suite of coordinated goals and actions.

Early delivery of priority actions will be an important first step to kick start the delivery of the strategy. This will include improving public advice services, developing the workforce, and coordinating the use of existing funding streams (for example, the government's Warm Homes scheme).

The EMCC Retrofit Strategy is a catalyst for action, not just on home energy efficiency, but for building a more resilient, prosperous, and inclusive region. With coordinated leadership, collaborative delivery, and ongoing support from partners, our region can become a model for retrofit at scale, delivering real-world benefits for households, the local economy, and the environment.

Our collective vision:

"A just future in which we're all living in healthy, energy-efficient homes within sustainable communities."

Our mission:

"We will improve our homes faster, prioritising confidence, quality, affordability and collaboration, and grow skills and jobs in our region."

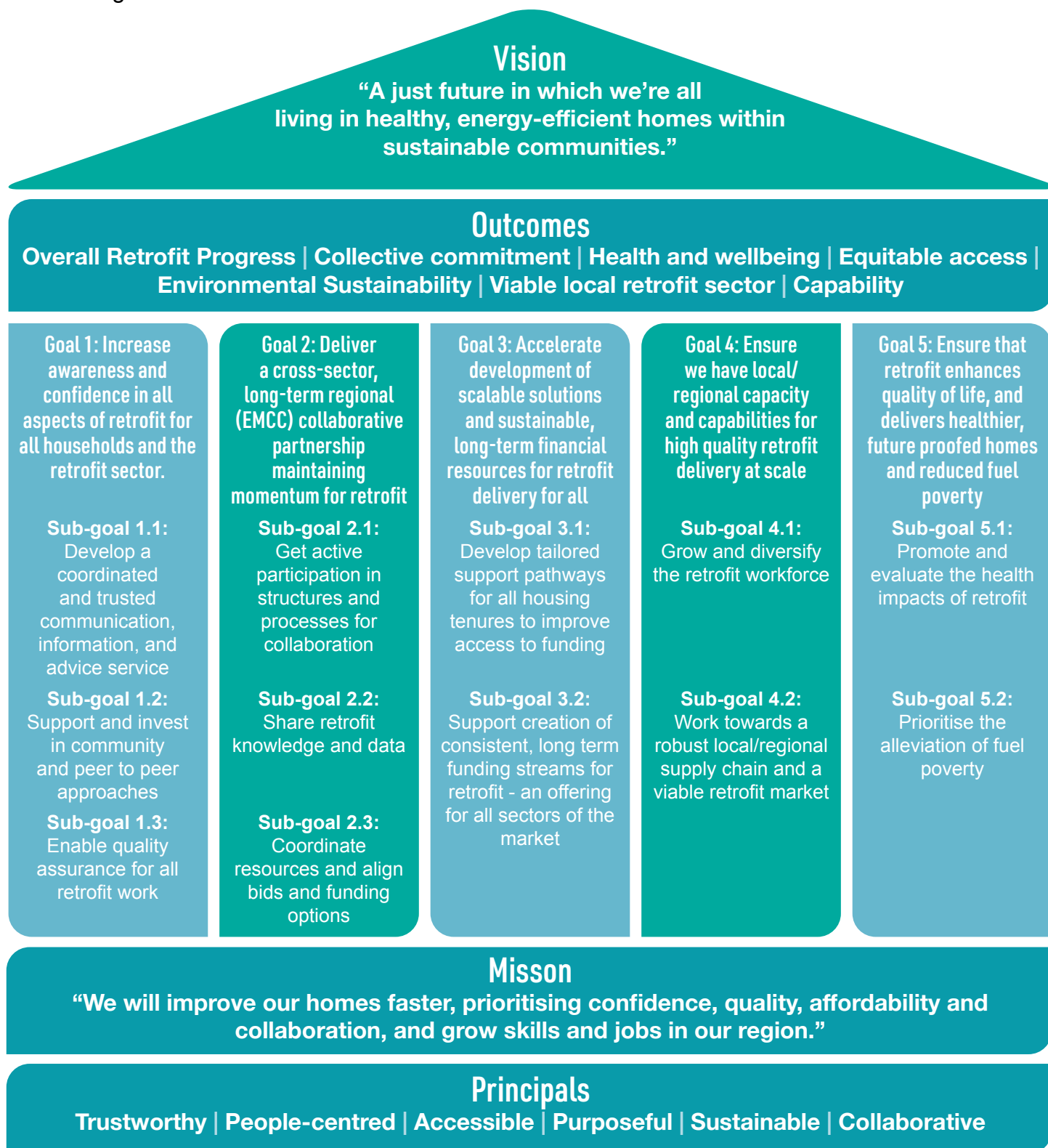
The approach is underpinned by six shared principles:

- Trustworthy
- People-centred
- Accessible
- Purposeful
- Sustainable
- Collaborative

3. The Strategy House

The 'Strategy House' visually captures the core outputs of the co-design process. It also reflects the systems approach needed to accelerate retrofit, as the house is only as strong as the sum of its parts.

- **The foundations** – our mission and principles provide stability and direction to anchor and guide our collective action.
- **The pillars** represent the goals and sub-goals.
- **The roof** contains the vision and outcomes, which provides a clear sense of purpose, uniting and covering all our efforts beneath it.



4. Introduction

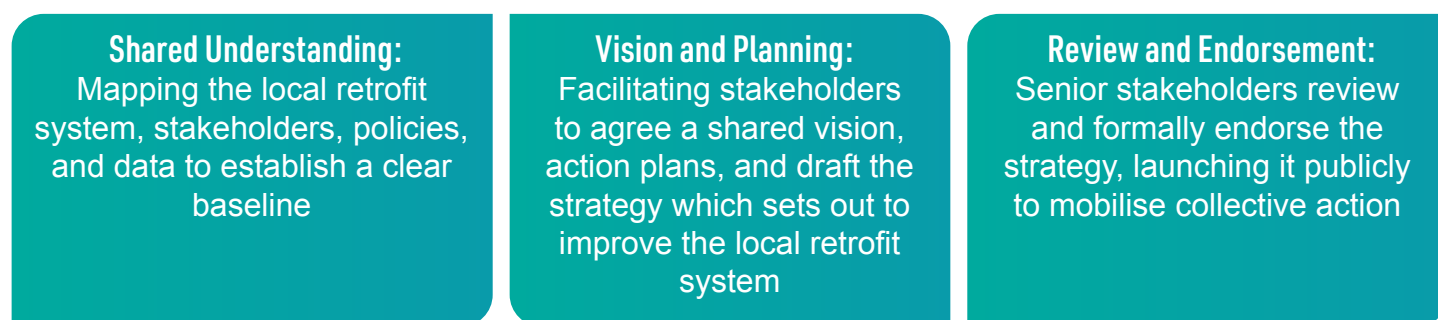
The EMCC Local Retrofit Strategy (the strategy) primarily sets out how the region can make progress in improving the efficiency of heating and cooling of domestic buildings and alleviating fuel poverty. But it is more than that. It's a plan to increase good health outcomes from living in decent homes, support growth within the sector, and to create skilled and well-paid jobs. It's about making decisions that balance economic, social, and environmental considerations. It has an eye on the future and ensures we are prepared for the climate to come. This aligns with the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) Corporate Plan by supporting the following themes highlighted in the plan:



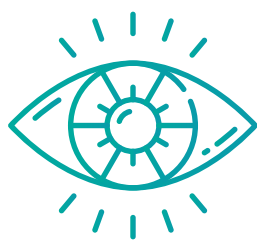
This strategy was developed as part of the Local Area Retrofit Accelerator pilot (the pilot). This initiative aimed to take a systems approach to tackling retrofit. A systems approach thinks about problems and solutions by considering the entire system, rather than individual parts. It's a holistic and interdisciplinary method that emphasises how different elements interact.

The pilot takes a place-based approach using a collaborative process to address the needs of a community by working together to improve the quality of life. It involves understanding a place's social context and physical setting. In this context the place was Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and stakeholders from across the retrofit system were invited to co-design the strategy.

The co-design delivery involved three key stages:



5. Vision and Mission



Our vision

"A just future in which we're all living in healthy, energy-efficient homes within sustainable communities."



Our mission

"We will improve our homes faster, prioritising confidence, quality, affordability, and collaboration, and grow skills and jobs in our region."



6. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

This SWOT was developed over several phases. The project team conducted qualitative and quantitative research published in the Locality Assessment with data gathered through desk-based research and stakeholder interviews.

The Locality Assessment informed the workshops and set a baseline understanding of the EMCC region's local retrofit system. The Locality Assessment report details specific geographic and demographic information about the area and provides insight into activity taking place there. Each element of the SWOT has fed into the goals and actions developed by the project team to ensure there is a strategic fit.

Strengths

- Rich experience of local retrofit delivery
- Local training centres
- Local partnerships and advice centres
- Best practice examples to build
- Local Area Energy Planning under way
- Retrofit Employers Forum
- Green skills programme

Opportunities

- Coordinated action through East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)
- Coordination of future skills development
- Pilot of mine water heat scheme in ex-coalmine
- Energiesprong, FurbNow, and other models can be replicated
- Public health support in retrofit
- Midland Net Zero Hub signposting
- Digital space opportunity building on the Green Rewards app
- Archetype guides

Weaknesses

- No list of recommend suppliers
- Grants and support not available to all
- Grants don't take account of differential costs for rural areas
- Lack of coordination between housing associations
- The community sector varies across the region
- A lot of the contractors working locally are based outside the region
- Need for better ways to measure the benefits of retrofit

Threats

- High levels of deprivation
- Lack of incentive for SMEs to invest in training staff
- Lack of trust and disinformation
- Complex retrofit projects are not cost-effective for installers
- Short-term government grant schemes

7. Principles

These key principles for a better retrofit system were identified by the region

TRUSTWORTHY – demonstrating competence and quality

PEOPLE-CENTRED – focus on the customer and giving them agency

ACCESSIBLE – providing clarity and making retrofit easy and inclusive

PURPOSEFUL – pragmatic idealism, action-orientated, and brave

SUSTAINABLE – a long-term, future-proofed approach

COLLABORATIVE – alignment, with everyone included and involved

These shared principles will help inform and guide retrofit activity undertaken by organisations who endorse the strategy. The governance agreements between signatories to the strategy will formally ensure their importance. The principles have influenced the goals and actions and are critical in achieving the vision.



8. Outcomes

These outcomes of the strategy will be delivered by achievement of the goals. Progress towards delivering the outcomes will be monitored and the project team propose the following metrics:

Overall progress KPIs:

- Percentage increase in number of homes per year retrofitted well
- Average EPC increased rating across the EMCC region
- Improved indices of fuel poverty
- Increase of people employed in retrofit careers
- Increase of accredited installers (e.g. MCS)
- Increase of collaborations and partnership in the retrofit system
- Increase of community energy organisations
- Increase of MCS accredited low carbon technology installations per year
- Increased level of investment in retrofit

Collective commitment

- Growing commitment to working together as a region

Health and wellbeing

- Reduction in number of people suffering poor health due to damp and/or mould via GP referrals
- Improvements to health and wellbeing, quality of life

Equitable access

- Reduction in fuel poverty and increase in accessibility of funding/finance

Environmental sustainability

- Reduction in carbon emissions from domestic properties

Viable local retrofit sector

- Local retrofit supply chain works and delivers quality retrofit

Capability

- Strong local skills base

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



9. Goals and Actions

The following goals and sub-goals have been determined by the region.

Each goal has an example of linked actions, further actions, and additional information including alignment to SWOT analysis that can be found in the accompanying action plan.



Goal 1

Increase awareness and confidence in all aspects of retrofit for all households and the retrofit.



Goal 2

Deliver a cross-sector, long term regional (EMCC) collaborative partnership maintaining momentum for retrofit.



Goal 3

Accelerate development of scalable solutions and sustainable, long-term financial resources for retrofit delivery for all.



Goal 4

Ensure we have local/regional capacity and capabilities for high quality retrofit delivery at scale.



Goal 5

Ensure that retrofit enhances quality of life, delivers healthier, future-proofed homes, and reduces fuel poverty.





Goal 1

Increase awareness and confidence in all aspects of retrofit for all households and the retrofit.

This goal aims to increase retrofit activity and the number of installed measures locally, enabling residents to live in healthy, energy-efficient homes. To achieve this, the focus will be on offering trusted advice, nurturing peer-to-peer communications, and improving quality assurance by highlighting positive stories.

Sub-goal 1.1: Develop a coordinated and trusted communication, information, and advice service

- Develop a comprehensive retrofit map featuring regional actors and networks to support providers and provide effective signposting to the best advice.
- Develop a trusted brand for regional advice and guidance providers to improve trust for public and suppliers
- Create a Retrofit Support Service website for advice and to triage service via website, email, phone, and events.

Sub-goal 1.2: Support and invest in community and peer-to-peer approaches

- Create a community engagement retrofit role or add to existing role to empower community organisations to support retrofit.
- Develop a network of community champions and organisations and provide retrofit training.
- Create a network of 'open homes' to demonstrate different technologies and support community groups to run events.

Sub-goal 1.3: Enable quality assurance for all retrofit work

- Create retrofit supply chain role(s) or add to existing position(s)
- Develop an agreed approach for grant commissioners to ensure good governance and quality of retrofit install
- Review ECO LA Flex practices and agree coordinated, minimum-service-level approach





Goal 2

Deliver a cross-sector, long term regional (EMCC) collaborative partnership maintaining momentum for retrofit.

This goal builds on the collaboration developed by key retrofit stakeholders across the region. Working together to deliver more for less with better outcomes. To achieve this there will be improved structures and processes for regional retrofit activity and greater collaboration across sectors, particularly around data sharing and funding opportunities.

Sub-goal 2.1: Get active participation in structures and processes for collaboration

- Create a role to coordinate stakeholder activity or allocate to existing position
- Facilitate a cross-sector action group to drive partnership activity between local authorities and social landlords – convened by EMCCA-based strategic lead
- Set up a cross-sector action group for skill development for employers and training providers convened by EMCCA-based strategic lead

Sub-goal 2.2: Share retrofit knowledge and data

- Create retrofit data and research role or allocate to existing position
- Facilitate data sharing and collaboration between organisations involved in retrofit to build understanding and map regional capabilities
- Collate and publish timely retrofit information and data and balance demand

Sub-goal 2.3: Coordinate resources and align bids and funding options

- Improve collaboration for grant scheme delivery between local authorities and social landlords
- Realise opportunities for collaboration and local supplier procurement from Warm Homes funding





Goal 3

Accelerate development of scalable solutions and sustainable, long-term financial resources for retrofit delivery for all.

This goal highlights the need for economic stimulus to achieve a growth, including both private investment and institutional funding. A more technical and coordinated approach to regional retrofit will focus on the need for long-term financial products alongside developing specialist support services while ensuring the best use of grant schemes and the development of appropriate financial offers.

Sub-goal 3.1: Develop tailored support pathways for all housing tenures to improve access to funding

- Create a grant scheme support and coordination role or allocate to existing position
- Research retrofit facilitation provider/ specialist support service options
- Consult stakeholders to develop and implement a retrofit facilitation model

Sub-goal 3.2: Support creation of consistent, long term funding streams for retrofit – an offering for all sectors of the market

- Create a retrofit finance coordination role or allocate to existing position
- Assess and compare local authority funding options, grants, loan schemes, carbon offsetting
- Consult with stakeholders on findings and determine preferred finance option(s) to develop and test





Goal 4

Ensure we have local/regional capacity and capabilities for high quality retrofit delivery at scale.

This goal helps to balance the demand-orientated actions of goals 1 and 3 while developing capacity within the local supply chain to support an increase in demand and diversification within the sector. This will ensure carbon reductions are delivered and give consumers confidence in their needs and aspirations being fulfilled.

Sub-goal 4.1: Grow and diversify the retrofit workforce

- Create a retrofit installer forum to provide upskilling, recruitment, and retention support
- Create a retrofit trainer forum to develop and agree a plan for retrofit training in the region
- Secure funding to develop and deliver services to support new entrants and cross-training into retrofit careers

Sub-goal 4.2: Work towards a robust local/regional supply chain and a viable retrofit market

- Develop and deliver procurement strategy with focus on SMEs in local supply chain, to include advice on accessing finance
- Develop and deliver SME-friendly social impact standard for retrofit projects/ procurement
- Boost communications within the supply chain to promote opportunities, support with challenges, celebrate best practice, and foster peer support





Goal 5

Ensure that retrofit enhances quality of life, delivers healthier, future-proofed homes, and reduces fuel poverty.

This goal reflects the vision and aspiration to deliver a range of benefits for all. Through improved housing retrofit we aim to deliver better life outcomes, including improved health and a reduction in fuel poverty. This will be underpinned by further research, the delivery of new, coordinated services and processes, and a collaborative approach to accelerate grant funding.

Sub-goal 5.1: Promote and evaluate the health impacts of retrofit

- Set up a public health retrofit forum with social and integrated care representatives to improve collaboration and increase health outcomes through retrofit
- Evaluate the health benefits of different retrofit approaches to guide future health-based investment and co-develop guides for best practice
- Improved collaboration between health and housing sectors to develop pilot projects to improve health outcomes

Sub-goal 5.2: Prioritise the alleviation of fuel poverty

- Create a retrofit fuel poverty role or allocate to existing role position
- Create a fuel poverty forum and conduct stakeholder assessment of those involved in fuel poverty work within region
- Deliver place-based, fuel poverty alleviation retrofit project(s), assess outcomes to ensure fuel poverty alleviation is prioritised, and develop improvement plans where needed



10. Endorsement

The strategy has been endorsed by the following organisations:

Organisation Logos to go here once endorsed

11. Definitions

The strategy has the following defined terms:

- **ACTIONS:** Things done by people and organisations in the East Midlands Combined Counties in support of goals, by individuals or groups.
- **GOALS:** Something the East Midlands Combined Counties hopes to achieve which is formed of multiple actions and achieved by multiple parties.
- **MISSION:** How the work needed to achieve the vision will be taken forward.
- **OUTCOMES:** The result of something, or the consequence of it, is the outcome.
- **STRATEGY:** A plan for the East Midlands Combined Counties made up of multiple goals and associated actions that work towards a wider mission and vision.
- **SYSTEMS-BASED APPROACH:** A systems approach thinks about problems and solutions by considering the entire system, rather than individual parts. It's a holistic and interdisciplinary method that emphasises how different elements interact.
- **VISION:** One sentence that describes the future-facing, longer-term ambition of the strategy and offers inspiration and motivation.



12. Information sources

Links to relevant organisational strategies and supporting reports to go here