



**Award Category:** Retrofit for the Future sponsored by Weber Saint-Gobain

**Project:** Boundary Way, Watford

**Client:** A partnership of Watford Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Community Housing Trust

**Contractor:** Cosy Seal Insulation Ltd



The project has brought together Three Rivers District Council, Watford Borough Council and Watford Community Housing Trust, working alongside CosySeal and National Energy Action to provide external insulation to over 100 homes on the Boundary Way Estate, Watford.

The Estate's 'Wimpey no fines' construction is unique in the area, with the housing split into blocks of between two and five dwellings. Varying degrees of disrepair were present to the existing render of this BRE designed estate. No improvements had taken place since it was

built over 35 years ago and the estate was starting to look tired. Previous improvements were hampered because the blocks typically include privately owned or rented and social owned properties. The council boundary split further added to the complexity.

DECC Fuel Poverty funding combined with ECO funding has provided the opportunity to insulate the homes free of charge to all residents regardless of income or tenure. Over 50% of the homes (regardless of tenure) claim council or housing tax benefit.

The render repairs and insulation not only reinvigorates the homes, but also ensures they remain fit for purpose. The high specification and insurance backed warranties ensure the properties remain fit for purpose well into the future. A brick slip system has been used on the ground floor to improve maintenance and resistance to damage, as well as improved aesthetics. This design feature has added significant value to the finished outcome. In conjunction with the insulation works, the street lighting on the estate has been replaced

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with new LED fittings and daylight sensors to both improve the lighting levels to the paths and reduce carbon.

The project will benefit around 270 residents on this 'fuel poor' and 'hard to treat' estate by reducing energy costs; stem a rise in deprivation on the estate and produce carbon savings of over 220 tonnes per year.

The National Energy Action are undertaking an evaluation of the project to determine the impact of the external wall insulations on a variety of aspects including CO2 emissions, fuel bills, temperature control levels and health and wellbeing, as reported by the residents.

Leader of Three Rivers District Council, Councillor Ann Shaw said, "This project has made a big difference to the homes on the estate and is already helping the residents save money on their energy bills. It is great news that the project has been recognised through this award."

Elected Mayor of Watford, Dorothy Thornhill said, "I am over the moon that this important project has been recognised by the Building Futures judges. The Boundary Way estate was built in the 1970's and has not had any improvement works since. Some residents have been finding it increasingly difficult to heat their homes. Residents can now enjoy a smart new finish to their properties with the added comfort of reduced energy costs."

Tina Barnard, Chief Executive of Watford Community Housing Trust, said, "We are very proud to lead this project which is making homes warmer, saving residents money and dramatically improving the appearance of Boundary Way. We feel the award is richly deserved."

### Judges comments:

"The regeneration of the Boundary Way estate will deliver numerous benefits in terms of sustainability. From a social sustainability perspective there is likely to be a new sense of pride in the estate which will hopefully result in lower levels of crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. From an economic perspective the external insulation will result in significantly lower heat loss and fuel bills. From an environmental sustainability perspective the insulation will reduce CO2 emissions whilst giving the homes a new lease-of-life and thereby avoid the environmental impact (and embodied carbon implications) associated with demolition and reconstruction. The client should also be commended for commissioning independent monitoring to determine which aspects of the refurbishment work well – it is hoped that the results will be widely disseminated, so that other housing associations and RSLs can learn the key lessons."