

# Understanding your local area: walk around exercise

This exercise makes a good first step in designing any project, from an energy audit project to a solid wall insulation scheme, as you can use the results from this to refine your data gathering activities subsequently.

You might want to combine this with the 'Retrofit a street' PlanLoCaL exercise in Chapter 4, which involves looking at different building types using Streetview in Google Maps to get more information about the type of building you are dealing with.

You can use this simple template to estimate the number of homes in your area that meet each of the criteria on the list. For some homes you might need to make an educated guess on some of the categories. The template could be filled in while doing a walkabout survey or used as a way of tallying the results of household energy surveys. You may want to fill in separate checklists for different streets and then combine the results, depending on the size of your area.

We've included a section to count up non-domestic buildings which you may also want to complete if you are considering projects that are not purely focussed on housing.

You could also add further features to this list. Wall type, for example, is fairly easy to identify for properties where the brickwork is exposed, or to predict based on the estimated age of the property.

Once you have completed the walk around exercise, discuss the results as a group and use the information to decide what your next steps will be.

The guidance in the PlanLoCaL resource 'Understanding your local area' will help you to interpret your results. For example:

- If you find you have a lot of older, detached buildings you might think about exploring how these householders would feel about a local solid wall insulation programme
- If you find lots of properties are off the gas network (and so are relying on expensive fuel types) you could explore the possibility of a renewable heating scheme, or perhaps setting up a local oil buyers association to help people shop around for a better deal
- If you find your area is made up of newer, more efficient properties you may decide to focus on a behavioural campaign, or even look at renewable energy options

Thinking about these possibilities before carrying out any further community engagement will help to ensure your engagement activities are relevant and focused and that any further data gathering exercises (such as an energy audit project) are going to give you the results you need.

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	Estimated number of properties	Estimated % in your area
<b>Property type</b>		
Detached		
Semi-detached		
Bungalow		
Terraced		
Flat		
<b>Age of property</b>		
pre-1870		
1871-1919		
1920-1945		
1946-1954		
1955-1979		
post-1980		
<b>Heating fuel</b>		
Gas		
Electricity		
Oil		
Solid fuel		
Other		
<b>No of bedrooms</b>		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5+		
<b>Number of non-domestic buildings</b>		
Business premises, offices & shops		
Church, village hall or community building		
School		
Other non-domestic property		