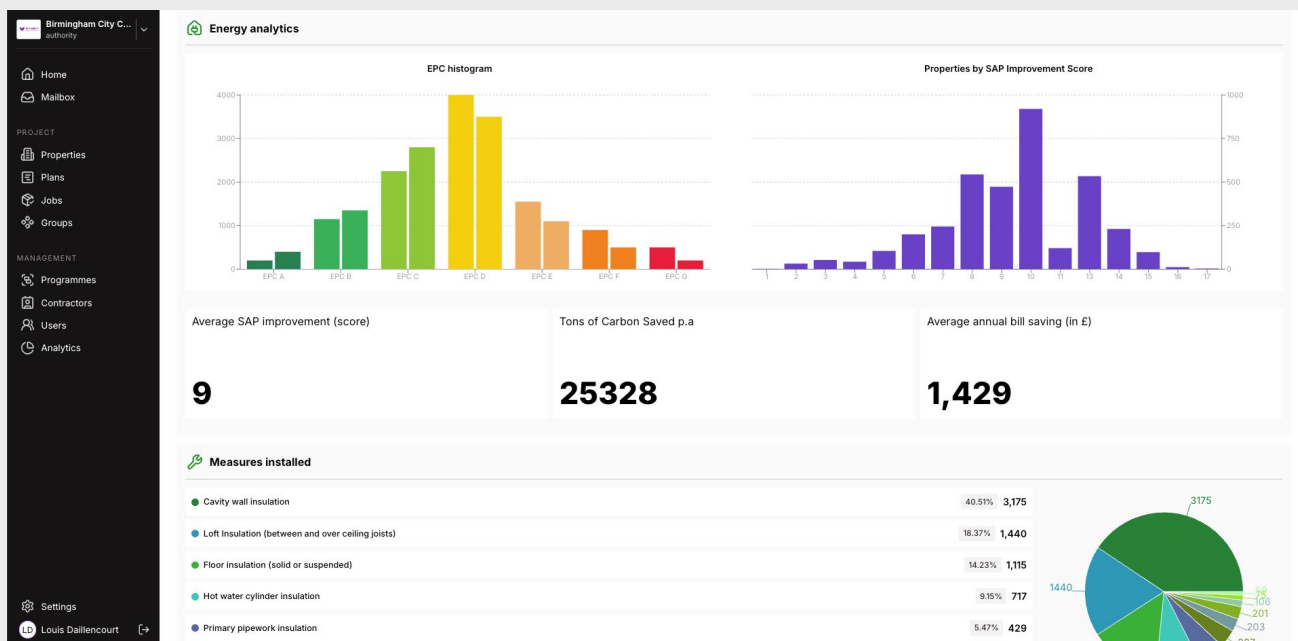




Case Study

Improving the energy efficiency of homes



Summary

Improving the energy efficiency of homes is central to meeting the UK's net zero targets. But for local authorities like Birmingham City Council (BCC), delivering retrofit programmes such as ECO4 and GBIS brings significant administrative challenges. Managing fragmented data, coordinating multiple stakeholders, and tracking customers throughout the process often results in duplication, delays, and a poor experience for beneficiaries.

BCC joined the Connected Places Catapult's DIATOMIC Accelerator with the ambition of finding solutions to improve its retrofit delivery.

The challenge

- Reducing back-office overheads
- Improving resident engagement
- Increasing transparency

Solution

BCC partnered with Novoville to tailor its Shared Works platform, a collaborative web platform purpose-built to coordinate retrofit delivery. Shared Works provides a single source of information across the council, contractors, and funders. It delivers automated processes for evidence collection, eligibility checks, and communications. A resident-facing portal improves customer experience, while a smart backend system reduces repetitive tasks for council officers.

This wasn't a demo or test environment: Shared Works was deployed live to support real residents under the council's ECO/GBIS^{1,2} programme.

Findings of the trial

After a short bedding-in period, Shared Works proved very successful, leading the council to procure the platform across all of its retrofit programmes. As of writing, over 700 properties have been processed through Shared Works in just a few months.

Key outcomes included:

- Many manual tasks for the Council were automated: the time it takes to administratively process an application was reduced by 65% overall according to council officers
- Almost 40% of residents created an account on Shared Works to track their progress and view their home plan
- The Council customised an analytics dashboard in Shared Works to view KPIs across the region, allowing them to spot issues and be more reactive
- Contractors such as City Energy and Next Energy integrated directly with Shared Works to sync data in real time and streamline customer processing

The trial and key activities

- Mapped administrative pain points in BCC's current ECO/GBIS Flex process and co-designed features with BCC's Route to Net Zero Carbon team
- Developed automated workflows for eligibility checks and document verification
- Enabled direct contractor access for evidence upload and applicant tracking
- Piloted the resident portal for applications and status updates
- Conducted user testing with local residents

What's next

Following the successful trial on ECO and GBIS, Birmingham City Council is working to extend Shared Works to additional retrofit schemes such as Warm Homes. There is also potential for Shared Works to support the council's asset management upgrades for its social housing stock.