

Powering

public assets for the long term



**A route map to
Decarbonisation**

Why NOW is the moment to act on decarbonisation

02

Foreword

In today's climate, asset leadership matters more than ever.

With fiscal pressure mounting, policy reform accelerating, and the climate clock ticking, public estate leaders must make bold, evidence-based decisions.

This route map is a strategic resource. It shows how to align vision, funding, and action—while positioning your estate for transformation. The journey to Net Zero won't be achieved overnight.

But it can start today.

Why estates matter now

Local authorities and blue light organisations manage thousands of public assets. These buildings house essential services. But many are carbon-intensive, costly to run, and increasingly unfit for purpose.

The hidden cost of doing nothing:

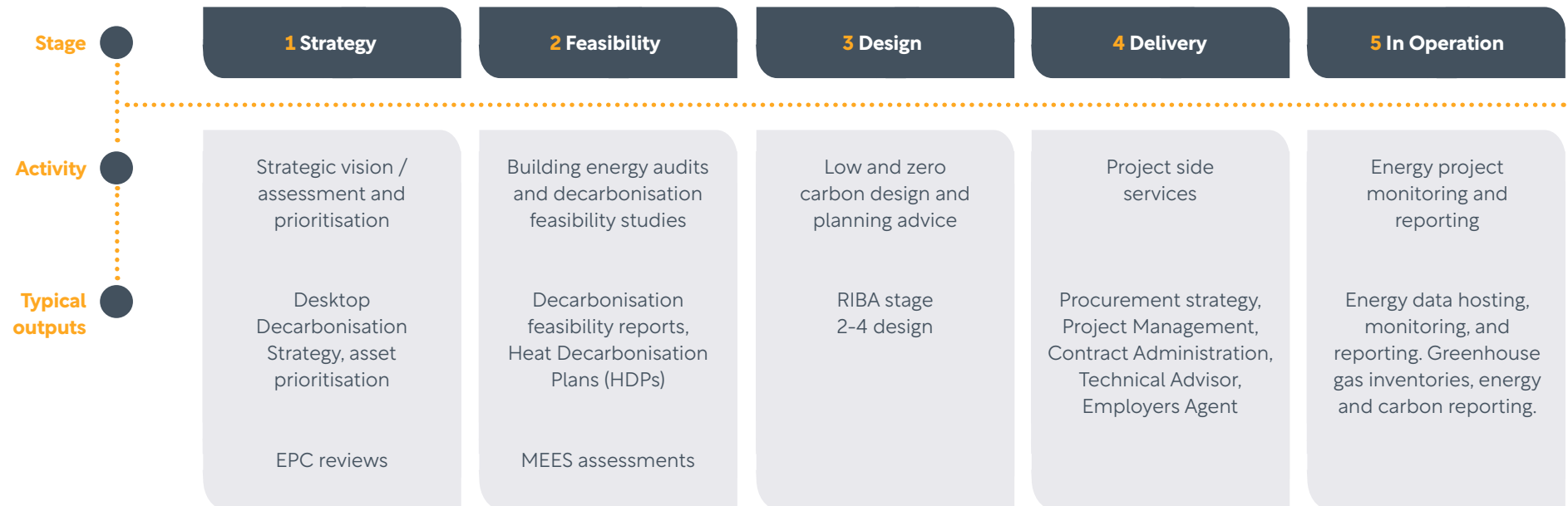
- 1 Surging energy bills
- 2 Growing maintenance backlogs
- 3 Increased compliance risks
- 4 Missed funding opportunities
- 5 Declining public value
- 6 Breaching Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) regulations



The NZC journey

To plan effectively, you need to know where you are. Here's the five-stage journey:

1 Strategy 2 Feasibility 3 Design 4 Delivery 5 In operation



What is MEES?

The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) are UK regulations introduced to improve the energy performance of buildings and support the country's net-zero carbon goals.

They apply to privately rented non-domestic (commercial) properties in England and Wales and are enforced under the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) Regulations 2015.

Currently, it is unlawful to let commercial properties with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating below 'E', unless an exemption is registered.

If unchanged, government proposal for MEES are to tighten the regulations by 2027 and 2030 retrospectively.

The UK government has set a phased trajectory to tighten MEES requirements for commercial properties:



By April 2027: EPC Rating C

1

All non-domestic rented buildings must achieve a minimum EPC rating of 'C' or registered exemption.

2

This is part of the first compliance window, running from April 2025 to April 2027.

3

Landlords must present a valid EPC by April 2025 and ensure compliance or register an exemption by April 2027.



By April 2030: EPC Rating B

1

The final target is for all non-domestic rented buildings to achieve a minimum EPC rating of 'B' or registered exemption.

2

This is part of the second compliance window, from April 2028 to April 2030.

3

A valid EPC must be presented by April 2028, with compliance or exemption required by April 2030.

Why this matters

Legal risk:

Non-compliance can lead to significant fines and restrictions on letting properties.

Asset value:

Properties that fail to meet MEES may become unlettable, reducing their market value.

Net-Zero goals:

These regulations are a key part of the UK's strategy to decarbonise the built environment.

Operational savings:

Energy-efficient buildings typically have lower running costs and improved occupant comfort.

With Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) compliance deadlines approaching, now is the time to act. Early investment in planning will put you ahead, ensuring your buildings meet regulatory requirements and avoid potential penalties.



Here's a step-by-step guide of how Norse Group can support you to achieve MEES compliance.

1

Property Assessment and Reporting

EPC Assessment: Conducting a thorough assessment of the property to determine its current Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating.

Detailed MEES Report: Providing a comprehensive report outlining the property's current EPC rating, identifying areas for improvement, and offering actionable recommendations to achieve compliance.

Scenario Planning: Presenting different scenarios for energy efficiency improvements, outlining the potential costs, energy savings, and payback periods for each option.

Building Modelling: Using specialized software to model the property's energy performance and simulate the impact of various energy-saving measures.

2

Compliance Guidance and Support

Navigating Regulations: Offering expert guidance on MEES regulations and the steps required to bring a property up to standard.

Exemptions and Reporting: Assisting with identifying and reporting any applicable exemptions to the MEES regulations.

Ongoing Support: Providing continued support to ensure sustained compliance with MEES and offering advice on maintaining and improving the property's energy performance.

3

Energy Efficiency Upgrades:

Identifying Opportunities:

Recommending cost-effective energy-saving measures, such as insulation upgrades, heating system improvements, or lighting upgrades.

4

Strategic Planning:

Portfolio Management: Developing strategic plans to bring entire property portfolios into compliance with MEES regulations.

Risk Assessment: Assessing the level of risk associated with non-compliance and developing a roadmap of improvements to mitigate those risks.

Value Enhancement: Highlighting the potential for increased property value and reduced operational costs associated with improved energy efficiency.

Aligning with reform and net zero

Two national priorities intersect in your asset base:

- 1 Wider Public Sector (and Local Government) Reform
- 2 Net Zero Commitment

They must be treated as complementary. Rationalising and retrofitting delivers both cost-efficiency and carbon reduction.



The cost of inaction

Each year of delay results in:

- 1 Escalating costs
- 2 Higher emissions
- 3 Lost funding
- 4 Compliance risk
- 5 Reputational damage



A legacy worth leading

You won't just pass on buildings. You'll pass on decisions.

Strategic investment now will:

- 1 Modernise services
- 2 Stabilise costs
- 3 Meet carbon goals
- 4 Build operational resilience



Take action

Key questions:

- 1 Do we have decarbonisation objectives and targets?
- 2 Do we have a decarbonisation strategy for our estate?
- 3 Have we undertaken an energy assessment across our estate?
- 4 Do we know what buildings are priorities for decarbonisation?
- 5 Do we need to undertake building energy audits and feasibility studies to identify cost effective decarbonisation solutions?



How we can support your net zero journey

We offer a comprehensive suite of services to help you plan, deliver, and optimise decarbonisation across your estate:

- 1 Net zero plan development and project management
- 2 Building energy audits and decarbonisation feasibility studies
- 3 MEES assessment
- 4 Heat Decarbonisation Plans (HDPs)
- 5 Low and zero carbon design and planning advice
- 6 Energy project management
- 7 Energy data hosting, monitoring, and reporting
- 8 Greenhouse gas inventories, energy and carbon reporting
- 9 Whole life carbon assessment technical support





Case study

01

Estate Decarbonisation Review James Paget University Hospital

In 2023, Norse Group were commissioned by JPUH, through its retained consultant Castons, to undertake a decarbonisation feasibility study across a number of buildings on the hospital estate. This supported JPUH's Outline Business Case to inform retention or disposal as part of the new future James Paget Hospital redevelopment.

Key achievements:

- 1 Norse Group conducted decarbonisation feasibility studies of 9 operational buildings and residential accommodation.
- 2 We developed Heat Decarbonisation Plans to support the Outline Business Case for the new JPUH Development.
- 3 We carried out an options appraisal for a standalone low carbon heating system or connection to the new hospital energy centre.



Case study

02

College Decarbonisation Plan Plumpton Agricultural College

In 2024, supported by Phase 5 Low Carbon Skills Funding, Norse Group undertook a holistic fabric and services feasibility study across all of the College's existing fossil fuel heated buildings and prepared a detailed Heat Decarbonisation Implementation Plan.

Key achievements:

- 1 Norse Group provided support to secure Salix Low Carbon Skills Funding.
- 2 We conducted a campus-wide decarbonisation feasibility study.
- 3 We reviewed anaerobic digestion opportunities from on-site farm operations.
- 4 We developed a detailed Heat Decarbonisation Implementation Plan over a three-year period. We are on target to meet the College's sustainability goals to achieve net-zero fossil fuels by 2035.



Case study

03

Passivhaus Retrofit St. Sophia Primary School

Norse Group has led on the design and delivery of this 'Passivhaus EnerPHit' certified school – with the 'EnerPHit' standard internationally recognised for delivering outstanding energy improvements in existing buildings.

Key achievements:

- 1 Norse Group delivered the UK's first Passivhaus EnerPHit school building.
- 2 We developed the design using PhPP modelling within a BIM environment.
- 3 We retained a large proportion of the existing structure.
- 4 This was regarded as a nationally important scheme.
- 5 Our work will extend the building's lifespan by up to 25 years.
- 6 It became an exemplar project for learning and knowledge sharing.



Case study

04

Salix LCSF and PSDS Heat Decarbonisation West Sussex County Council

Norse Group undertook a holistic building appraisal in accordance with Salix guidance for HDP's and PSDS funding – to evaluate opportunities for energy and carbon savings. The measures considered range from fabric improvements, energy efficiency and new low carbon / renewable technologies. Site surveys are undertaken, building fabric measurements and detailed calculations for energy and carbon reductions. Proposed measures are put forward, with corresponding estimated project costs and associated carbon savings. With PSDS funding, 14 sites have been moved through detailed design and delivery into operation.

Key achievements:

- 1 Outlined pathways for WSCC to work towards net zero carbon in their buildings
- 2 Reduced energy demand through the improvement of WSCC's building fabric
- 3 Short-to-long term energy cost savings
- 4 Increased the WSCC's knowledge of what is required to decarbonise its built environment
- 5 Improved public perception of local authorities' efforts to preserve environment through reduction in carbon emissions



norsegroup.co.uk