KEY CONCLUSIONS

• **Refurbishment of social housing can deliver significant improvements in energy, environmental and health performance**, which can lead to costs savings and improved living standards for residents.
• Refurbishments can have **lower overall lifetime costs than demolition and construction** and can cause less disruption to communities and residents.
• **Engaging residents in regeneration decisions is crucial** and has resulted in successful refurbishment of a number of social housing properties.

Key points for making decisions

• Social factors and well-being indicators should be incorporated into decision-making alongside cost, energy and carbon indicators.
• Decisions about refurbishment and demolition can be complex: cost and performance models are highly sensitive to a few key assumptions about the expected lifetime of buildings and future energy prices.
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- Embodied carbon in buildings may start to make a more signi f cant contribution to emissions than operational carbon as the UK generates more electricity from renewable sources.
- Water e ciency should be considered both in designs for new buildings and in refurbishment programmes.
- T e construction sector produces 35% of waste in the UK. Refurbishment avoids considerable waste from demolition and construction of new buildings.
• Sharing evidence and synthesising case studies would help social landlords, tenants, developers and lenders make and explain decisions about refurbishment and demolition. T is, alongside development of the supply chain, may help to unlock investment in refurbishment

Introduction

T is policy brie f ng summarises the main factors involved when deciding whether to refurbish or demolish social housing, including environmental and economic costs and bene f ts. Such decisions will involve trade-o f s between di f erent objectives and values. T e brie f ng discusses:

• evaluating the economic case for refurbishment, including impacts on communities and residents;
• the energy and carbon implications of demolition compared to refurbishment;
• issues around water and waste; and
• social factors in housing and regeneration, including health and community participation.

4. Social factors in decision-making

Impacts on residents' wellbeing

Understanding the impact of demolition or refurbishment on residents is complex, as health and wellbeing are broad and interdependent on many different factors. Because wellbeing is