



RISE

Retrofit information,
support & expertise

Retrofit Services and Successes with Hamilton First

Case study

July 2026

Funded by:



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

www.riseretrofit.org.uk





Contents

Contents2

Retrofit Success Stories.....3

Introduction.....3

Background3

 Hamilton First and SHDF Wave 13

Adrian’s personal motivation4

Hamilton first’s retrofit services4

 Whole-house approach4

 Social value and community impact5

Workforce retention, skills, and long-term employment.....5

Retrofit Success Stories

This series explores the experiences, expertise, and perspectives of organisations and individuals delivering housing retrofit projects across the UK. Through these stories, the series highlights how retrofit programmes are improving housing quality, reducing fuel poverty, supporting local economies, and advancing the transition toward low-carbon homes.

Readers that would like this document in a more accessible format should contact rise@turntown.co.uk.

Introduction

This case study focuses on **Hamilton First**, a specialist façade and retrofit contractor involved in the delivery of Hull City Council's **Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1** programme. Through an interview with **Adrian Morley**, Contract Manager at Hamilton First, the case study explores the organisation's retrofit services, workforce culture, and commitment to delivering high-quality housing improvements that support both environmental and social outcomes.

Hull City Council received **£1.2 million in Government funding** under the **Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1** scheme to improve the energy efficiency of 109 social housing properties across the city. The project was delivered in partnership with local supply chain organisations, including retrofit specialist **Hamilton First**. As part of the programme, Hamilton First supported the delivery of energy efficiency improvements aimed at creating warmer, healthier, and more sustainable homes for residents.

Background

Hamilton First and SHDF Wave 1

Established in 1996, Hamilton First is now one of the UK's largest and longest-standing façade contractors. Over nearly three decades, the company has worked on more than **100,000 properties** of varying sizes, building types, and complexities across the country.

The organisation specialises in a range of retrofit and façade improvement services, including:

- External Wall Insulation (EWI)
- Recladding and façade remediation
- Refurbishment of existing buildings
- New-build façade systems
- Retrofit partnerships with local authorities and housing providers

Hamilton First works both as a principal contractor and subcontractor, supporting local authorities, social housing providers, and delivery partners in achieving energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets.

The company holds several recognised industry accreditations, including **PAS2030 certification**, **TrustMark accreditation**, and membership with the **Insulated Render and Cladding Association (INCA)**. Hamilton First is also one of a small number of contractors able to provide a **25-year insurance-backed warranty** through the Solid Wall Insulation Guarantee Agency (SWIGA) for high-rise retrofit projects.

Beyond technical delivery, the organisation also places emphasis on creating broader social value through local employment, apprenticeships, sustainability education, and community engagement initiatives.

Adrian's personal motivation

Having worked at Hamilton First for 15 years, Adrian Morley's career journey reflects both his personal dedication to the construction industry and the long-term opportunities available within the retrofit sector. Starting out "on the tools" before progressing into his current role as Contract Manager, Adrian has built his career through practical experience, consistency, and a strong work ethic.



Figure 1 Adrian Morley, Contract Manager at Hamilton First

When reflecting on his motivations for working within retrofit and construction, Adrian spoke about the importance of **personal ambition** and **taking pride in his work**:

"I've got a motivation to make something of myself. I'm 62. I've done my stretch; I've done my 14 years. I will try my best because that's what I do, and that's what I've always done. And I'll always continue to do so."

His perspective reflects a wider culture within Hamilton First, where long-term employment, practical knowledge, and workforce loyalty are highly valued. Adrian also expressed confidence in the future of the retrofit industry, particularly as demand for housing decarbonisation and energy efficiency improvements continues to grow across the UK.

Hamilton first's retrofit services

Whole-house approach



During the interview, Adrian explained that Hamilton First's approach to retrofit extends beyond the installation of external wall insulation alone. Instead, the organisation adopts a broader “**whole-house**” perspective that considers multiple aspects of building performance together.

Adrian described how retrofit assessments often identify opportunities to improve several components of a property simultaneously:

“It’s something we’ve always done. We offered more than just EWI. It’s in your interests during assessments to do other windows, locks, insulation, any cavity.”

There is a growing recognition within the retrofit sector that isolated improvements are often less effective than integrated approaches. Upgrading insulation without considering ventilation, windows, or thermal bridging can limit the long-term performance of retrofit interventions. By contrast, whole-house retrofit seeks to improve the building as an interconnected system.

Hamilton First's work demonstrates how façade improvements can contribute to wider social and environmental goals. External wall insulation (EWI), for example, not only improves thermal performance and reduces energy demand but can also improve the appearance, durability, and value of housing stock. According to Hamilton First, **properties treated with EWI can increase in value by up to 28%.**

For social housing providers, these interventions help address several challenges simultaneously:

- Improving resident comfort
- Reducing energy bills
- Extending the lifespan of housing assets
- Supporting local decarbonisation strategies

Social value and community impact

In addition to technical delivery, Hamilton First promotes retrofit as an opportunity to create wider community benefits. The company supports:

- Local employment opportunities
- Apprenticeship programmes
- Sustainability-focused educational workshops
- Community awareness around energy efficiency and sustainable design

The successful delivery of retrofit programmes increasingly depends on their ability to generate meaningful local social value alongside environmental improvements.

Workforce retention, skills, and long-term employment

Workforce retention and the development of a stable, experienced talent pool remain critical challenges within the retrofit sector. Adrian reflected on the labour

shortages facing construction and retrofit industries across the UK, while also highlighting Hamilton First's success in retaining skilled workers over long periods of time:

"There has been a labour shortfall over the past 10–15 years I would say... We've got staff that have worked here for 25 years and haven't gone anywhere."

He explained that many members of the workforce remain with the company for decades, creating a strong internal culture and continuity of expertise. HE explain that's Hamilton first are *"lucky"* to have *"a core workforce that doesn't go anywhere."*

This stability is significant within retrofit delivery, where quality assurance, technical knowledge, and consistent workmanship are essential to achieving long-term building performance. Adrian's perspective also challenged some of the more pessimistic narratives surrounding the future of construction and retrofit industries. Rather than viewing the sector as declining, Adrian expressed strong confidence in the continued importance of retrofit work in the years ahead.

Reflecting on advice for younger generations entering the industry, stating *"There's a fruitful career"* for them.

He concluded with a simple but direct message about work ethic and opportunity:

"Work hard and get out of bed in the morning, that's what I'll say to those in the industry."

Link to resources referenced:

[Specialist Facade Contractors | Hamilton](#)



www.riseretrofit.org.uk



RISE – Retrofit information, support & expertise