



The first stage of a study sponsored by insulation manufacturer Rockwool, has been completed on a West London estate that could provide a blueprint for taking householders out of fuel poverty.

'High Rise Hope' presents evidence from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) on the social impact of greening homes by insulating residential tower blocks.

The study measures energy costs and social conditions before and during a £16 million upgrade of three tower blocks at the Edward Woods Estate in Shepherds Bush. Improvements affected community pride, feelings of safety, relationships with other residents, energy bills and fuel poverty.

A follow-up study in 2013 will measure the longer-term benefits and costs for residents and the landlord, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham led the upgrade and energy saving project, and insulation measures were supplied by Rockwool, who also commissioned the research. Each block now has south-facing solar panels, producing electricity to power lifts and lighting in communal areas.

Anne Power, Professor of Social Policy at LSE, said: "There are social reasons for doing these works. There is a strong and well-documented link between taking care of places and creating a sense of community and belonging."

Thomas Heldgaard, managing director of Rockwool UK, added: "Whole-building energy efficiency refurbishment can have positive effects on local communities, well beyond saving money on energy bills. With schemes such as the Green Deal and ECO set to get fully underway next year, we hope this research will show that energy efficiency is only one of the benefits of greening British homes."