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## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **New research suggests energy efficiency in the home may not save energy**

New research suggests that Government plans to achieve an 80% reduction in the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from existing UK homes by 2050 may be unrealistic because householders use energy efficiency initiatives to make their homes more comfortable rather than to save energy.

Writing in a special issue of the ***Building Research & Information*** journal, researchers from the Carbon Reduction in Buildings (CaRB) Consortium present detailed new evidence on how people use energy in buildings. The researchers overturn beliefs surrounding technical improvements in the home by suggesting that energy efficiency measures seem to encourage householders to turn up the heat, leave the heating on for longer and heat more rooms.

“The Government may have overestimated the impact its Great British Refurbishment programme will have on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions,” said CaRB Consortium member Kevin Lomas, Professor of Building Simulation at Loughborough University. “Our research shows that some householders who install double glazing, insulation and energy-efficient boilers end up using fuel at close to the old levels because they are more concerned about comfort than saving energy. Even when energy prices rise, the reduction in demand for energy may be only temporary.”

The researchers believe that technical interventions alone will be insufficient to meet the Government’s targets. They propose a more integrated approach embracing economic, technical, social and behavioural factors. This would include targeting national refurbishment strategies at larger homes and other types of property where the greatest gains in energy reduction can occur, changes to the design and marketing of building products and services to improve energy performance, and a social marketing programme to establish ‘social norms’ for reducing temperatures in ‘overheated’ homes.

Professor Lomas’ article published in Volume 38 Issue 1 of ***Building Research & Information*** is available to download for free from: <http://tinyurl.com/BRI381Editorial>.

The complete issue of ***Building Research & Information***, containing an in-depth investigation into the relevant questions, is available from: <http://tinyurl.com/BRI381>.

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