

GLA Carbon Offset Funds Guidance – Practice Note

Data from the GLA's annual carbon offset survey monitoring has highlighted that some Local Planning Authorities' (LPA) offset funds are not being spent as readily as we would hope.

We understand that there are a number of relevant factors that are playing their part, highlighted through our annual survey, from engagement with the London Councils Climate Programme, and direct feedback from LPAs. Through this process we have identified a need to provide some further clarity on our guidance to help LPAs feel confident in using their offset funds to deliver much needed climate action across London.

While the primary aim of the policy is to enable the implementation of local carbon mitigation measures with tangible carbon reductions, we do recognise the importance and value of enabling the delivery of additional climate actions. Below is a sample list of projects which other LPAs have funded through their own offset funds in the past. We broadly deem these types of projects as appropriate use of the funds when they form part of a wider suite which includes mitigation projects that directly reduce carbon as well. Furthermore, when offset funds are used to enable access to additional or new funding pots, such as by providing match funding, this helps make the case for a wider range of project types to be funded.

Example projects have included: district heat networks; urban greening and green infrastructure; adaptation measures; community projects; and feasibility studies with a clear connection to enabling projects to be delivered. Furthermore, where funds are required for additional staff to develop and manage identified projects, we recommend a maximum of 10 per cent of funds (as noted in GLA Guidance), allocated either annually or per project, and set out clearly in any agreements.

The GLA and London Councils have jointly produced the following as part of the London Councils Climate Programme. Please contact the GLA or London Councils if you need access:

- A clarifications document which will provide more detailed responses to some of the main questions regarding GLA guidance for spending offset funds.
- A case study portfolio of borough spending projects, demonstrating the breadth of initiatives the fund can be spent on.

We would note that ultimately LPAs are responsible for how they spend their carbon offset funds and may therefore wish to seek their own legal advice to ensure they are clear about planning obligations for specific applications and any related Section 106 agreements.

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