

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA110118-0103

1 February 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information which the GLA received on 10 January 2018. Your request has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Mayor's zero carbon homes policy which was introduced on 1 October 2016, requires developers to achieve at least a 35% improvement beyond Part L of national Building Regulations, with any shortfall in emissions either paid into the relevant boroughs' carbon offset fund. Alternatively, an agreement can be made between the borough and developer to fund an off-site carbon reduction project. To correct the statement in your email, developers are therefore required to go significantly beyond Building Regulations before any offset payments are made.

We monitor progress against the carbon targets set out in policy 5.2 of the London Plan through annual energy monitoring reports. The latest report covering calendar year 2016 is available here:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/energy_monitoring_report_final_v6.pdf

However, as the zero carbon homes target is still relatively new, no planning applications that were approved in 2016 were required to meet the zero carbon target as it only applies to applications submitted after 1 October 2016. The 2017 report, which will be published later this year, will include coverage of progress against the zero carbon homes policy.

Boroughs are responsible for setting up offset funds, and collecting and spending these funds on carbon reduction projects. Further information on how these funds should be spent is available in the Sustainable Design & Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/supplementary-planning-guidance/housing-supplementary>

The majority of boroughs use their section 106 governance procedures to ensure their funds are spent appropriately. You might be interested in the Review of carbon offsetting approaches in London report which was published by the National Energy Foundation in June 2016:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_cof_approaches_study_final_report_july_2016.pdf

It includes case studies of towns outside of London which have implemented zero carbon and offsetting policies. Further information on the payments made and how offset funds are being spent will be made available by the GLA later in 2018.

In terms of the carbon offsetting price, boroughs may set their own local price based on the cost of carbon reduction in the borough, or they may use a nationally recognised price, such as the £60/tonne which is used by most boroughs. Our recently published draft new London Plan, which is currently out for consultation and expected to be adopted in 2019, proposes a new price of £95/tonne in Sustainable Infrastructure (SI) policy 2 which is available here:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/new-london-plan/draft-new-london-plan/chapter-9-sustainable-infrastructure/policy-si2-minimising-greenhouse-gas>

Explanation of the £95/tonne price is given in an Energy Topic Paper which was published alongside the new draft London Plan:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/energy_policies_topic_paper.pdf

The government's announcement on sustainable design and construction (that you reference) has not yet been reflected in legislation and does not alter published planning policies, including those set out in the London Plan. For the Minor Alteration to the London Plan (Housing), the Mayor produced evidence which demonstrated that the proposed housing standards, including 'zero carbon' with an off-set price of £60 per tonne of carbon for 30 years, would be viable for most developments in most locations across London.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA110118-0103.

Yours sincerely

Anne-Marie Robinson
Senior Policy Programme Officer

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA's FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>