

GREATERLONDONAUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Our Ref: **MGLA050520-0936**

3 June 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information which the GLA received on 5 May 2020. Your request has been dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004.

You asked for;

- 1. Details of any auditing procedure carried out in 2018 or 2019 on behalf of the Mayor's office on carbon offsetting funds established by local planning authorities - including who is employed to do the audit, how much it cost, the procedure of what they did. Please also provide any documents that offer proof and outcome of audits (these documents might contain all the relevant info).*
- 2. Any grants or subsidies given to local authorities or developments in London for them to pay for carbon offsets or to meet their climate targets, and details of what this money paid for.*
- 3. A copy of the viability assessment that led to the decision that led to the £95/tonne carbon offset price outlined in the draft new London plan (as discussed 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>).*
- 4. A copy of minutes from any meetings, or email chains where the decision to raise the former recommended carbon price of £60/tonne (as indicated in SPG here https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_migrate_files_destination/Sustainable%20Design%20%26%20Construction%20SPG.pdf) to £95/tonne in the draft New London Plan was discussed.*
- 5. Documents or information that outlines any safeguards that the Mayor's office has to ensure money paid into offset funds enables exactly one tonne of carbon savings elsewhere, either for their own offsetting schemes or for those carried out by LPAs.*

Our response to your request is as follows:

1. The GLA surveys boroughs annually on the value of their carbon offset funds, how these funds are being spent and how funds operate in practice. The results are presented in a publicly available report based on information provided by each borough. The GLA does not undertake detailed audits of offset funds. The latest carbon offset fund survey report is available here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/energy-monitoring-reports>. These surveys are carried out by GLA officers
2. The carbon offset survey reports provide the total amount available in each borough's carbon offset fund and provides a high-level summary of the type of projects these payments are spent on. The GLA does not collect data on the individual projects which are funded.
3. The viability assessment for the new London Plan is available on the GLA's website: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_plan_viability_study_dec_2017.pdf
4. There are no records of minutes or email chains. The decision was informed by research which AECOM were commissioned to undertake and which recommended that a national carbon pricing mechanism should be used i.e. Treasury Green Book non-traded carbon prices for 2017, rather than a price set by the cost of a specific offsetting solutions, and that the price is reviewed every 3-5 years. Further detail is provided in the report: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_carbon_offset_price_-_aecom_.pdf
5. The GLA's Carbon Offset Funds Guidance was published in October 2018 and provides guidance to boroughs on collecting and spending payments. The guidance explains that a strict 1:1 ratio between the cost of the offset measure to save one tonne of carbon compared to the offset price per tonne of carbon is not required. It is the responsibility of individual boroughs to ensure offset funds are being set up and managed effectively and in line with the GLA's policy and guidance. The guidance is available on our website: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/carbon_offset_funds_guidance_2018.pdf

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

██████████nson
Information Governance 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>

Annex 1

Carbon Offset Survey 2019

Respondent information

1. Email address
2. Local Planning Authority (LPA) Name
3. Your job title
4. Your department (e.g. planning, environment)

Carbon reduction & offsetting policies

1. Is your LPA applying the Mayor's carbon offsetting policy set out in Policy 5.2 of the current London Plan?
 - Yes
 - No
2. Why is your LPA not currently applying this policy and when will it be applied from?

Carbon performance

1. Energy efficiency (major new residential): Within the last 12 months, what is the average carbon reduction from energy efficiency for major new build residential schemes in your LPA (as a percentage improvement on Building Regulations 2013)?
 - 0%
 - 1-3%
 - 4-6%
 - 7-9%
 - 10-12%
 - 13-15%
 - 16-20%
 - Other:
2. Total carbon reduction (major new residential): Within the last 12 months, what is the average total carbon reduction for major new build residential schemes in your LPA (as a percentage improvement on Building Regulations 2013)?

- Below 15%
- 15-19%
- 20-24%
- 25-29%
- 30-34%
- 35-39%
- 40-44%
- 45-49%
- 50-54%
- Other:

3. Energy efficiency (minor new residential): Within the last 12 months, what is the average carbon reduction from energy efficiency for minor new build residential schemes in your LPA (as a percentage improvement on Building Regulations 2013)?

- 0%
- 1-3%
- 4-6%
- 7-9%
- 10-12%
- 13-15%
- 16-20%
- Other:

4. Total carbon reduction (minor new residential): Within the last 12 months, what is the average total carbon reduction for minor new build residential schemes in your LPA (as a percentage improvement on Building Regulations 2013)?

- Below 15%
- 15-19%
- 20-24%
- 25-29%
- 30-34%
- 35-39%
- 40-44%
- 45-49%
- 50-54%
- Other:

5. Energy efficiency (major new non-residential): Within the last 12 months, what is the average carbon reduction from energy efficiency for major new build non-residential schemes in your LPA (as a percentage improvement on Building Regulations 2013)?

- 0%
- 1-5%
- 6-10%
- 11-15%
- 16-20%
- 21-25%
- 26-30%
- 31-35%
- 39-40%
- Other:

6. Total carbon reduction (major new non-residential): Within the last 12 months, what is the average total carbon reduction for major new build non-residential schemes in your LPA (as a percentage improvement on Building Regulations 2013)?

- Below 15%
- 15-19%
- 20-24%
- 25-29%
- 30-34%
- 35-39%
- 40-44%
- 45-49%
- 50-54%
- Other:

7. Does your LPA apply the carbon offsetting policy to any of the following developments when the on-site carbon reduction target is not met? Tick all that apply.

- Major non-domestic
- Major refurbishments
- Minor residential
- Minor non-residential
- Minor refurbishments
- None of the above

Carbon offset price

1. What carbon offset price (£/tonne) does your LPA use?
2. If your LPA has adopted a local carbon price, please insert a link to your viability assessment and the published price.

Carbon offset payments and spend

1. What is the total amount of carbon offset payments that have been collected by your LPA since 1 October 2016?
2. What amount has been secured by legal agreement but not yet collected?
3. What is the total amount of carbon offset payments spent by your LPA since 1 October 2016?
4. At what stage is the final carbon offset payment that an applicant will pay calculated?
 - Planning determination
 - Upon construction
 - Post-occupation
 - Other:
5. At what stage do applicants make the carbon offsetting payment?
 - On commencement on-site
 - On completion
 - At first occupation
 - Other:
6. Do you use a proportion of the carbon offset fund to pay for staff to develop and manage the fund/offsetting projects? If so, please provide details of the proportion of the fund that is used and what it is used for.
7. Have any developers refused to make a carbon offset payment?
 - Yes
 - No

8. Has your LPA returned any carbon offset payments to the developer?
- Yes
 - No
9. Has your LPA agreed that a developer may install carbon saving measures off-site to meet a shortfall in carbon emissions, rather than making a payment into an offset fund?
- Yes
 - No
10. If your LPA is collecting offset payments but not spending them, what are the barriers? (Or insert N/A)

Carbon offset projects

1. Does your LPA have a list of projects that could be funded from the carbon offset fund?
- Yes
 - No
2. What type of projects have been funded? Tick all that apply.
- Corporate/Operation estate: energy efficiency projects
 - Corporate/operational estate: renewable energy projects
 - Schools: Maintained
 - Schools: Academies
 - Housing: Council
 - Housing: Associations
 - Fuel poverty
 - Decentralised energy projects
 - Greening projects (trees and green spaces)
 - Private sector housing grants
 - Business energy grants
 - Behaviour change and education

- Other:
3. How does your LPA determine which projects will be funded?
 4. Do you think your LPA would support a London carbon offsetting fund in which funds from more than one LPA were pooled to deliver strategic projects?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 5. Would you be willing to provide a case study of a project that has benefitted from carbon offset funds?
 - Yes
 - No

Governance, auditing & reporting

1. What are your LPA's governance arrangements for the carbon offset fund (including regularity of meetings)?
2. Are projects audited to ensure carbon savings have occurred? If so, how?
3. Does your LPA target an average ratio of carbon cost to carbon savings? If so, what is the ratio and whether it is by project or by total fund?
4. Does your LPA publish the carbon offset fund spend and the amount of carbon saved? If so, where and how regularly?
5. What criteria are used to assess the performance of carbon offset projects once funding has been provided?
6. Has your LPA, or does it intend to, combine offset funds with other sources of funding or finance? If so, please provide details.

Support and feedback

1. Is there further support the GLA could provide in supporting the implementation of this policy? If so, please provide details.
2. If you have any final comments on carbon offset funds or this survey, please provide them here.