

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Our Ref: **MGLA010520-0586**

3 June 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information which the GLA received on 30 April 2020. Your request has been dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004.

You asked for;

1. A strategy document that outlines the GLA's carbon strategy, which includes any strategy for using carbon offsets to meet carbon targets.
2. Details of all projects that offset payments have been made towards by the GLA since 2015, including who is running those projects, what is being done with the money in the projects, the value of payments made by the GLA, and over what period money is being.
3. Copies of any annual reports available from the past few years that are made by the GLA on LPAs' carbon offset funds, as P29 of this document indicates takes place:
https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/carbon_offset_funds_guidance_2018.pdf
4. Any strategy document or survey available that outlines what the GLA specifically looks at when it reports on offset funds - including, if relevant, how it regulates whether carbon savings in offsetting projects are matching the carbon emitted in developments; how it determines whether offsetting projects are additional to projects that might already exist; and any other relevant regulation made by the GLA.
5. A record of any occasion since the establishment of carbon offset funds by LPAs when the GLA has contacted or reprimanded LPAs as a result of offsetting funds failing to work as they should. Please send any relevant documentation that refers to these occasions, including information on what the problem was that the GLA found, how the GLA then acted, and how the LPA then responded with respect to the problem found.

Our response to your request is as follows:

1. The GLA's strategy for achieving net zero carbon is set out in the Mayor's 1.5C Climate Action Plan which is available on our website: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we->

[do/environment/climate-change/climate-action-plan](#). It explains that the zero carbon pathway assumes that there will be 10 per cent residual emissions which will need to be offset through negative emissions technologies.

2. The GLA offsets carbon emissions from flights through the carbon offsetting service provided by Carbon Footprint Ltd a leading carbon offset solutions provider and using Gold Standard Certified Emission Reduction carbon credits. From 2014/15 – 2018/19 the GLA's offsetting payments have been spent on the Zhangbei Dayangzhuang Wind Farm Project in China. In 2018/2019 the GLA's offsetting payment went towards the Nanyang Dankian River Solar Cooker Project in China.
3. The latest carbon offset fund survey is available on the website: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/energy-monitoring-reports>. This is where future reports will also be published.
4. An example of the questions that boroughs are expected to respond are provided in Appendix 1 of the Carbon Offset Funds Guidance: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/carbon_offset_funds_guidance_2018.pdf. The questions may change year on year. A full list of questions asked as part of the 2019 survey are provided at the end of this response, see Annex 1. This includes questions relating to the carbon offset ratio i.e. the cost of the offset measure to save one tonne of carbon compared to the offset price per one tonne of carbon. As explained in the Carbon Offset Funds Guidance, a strict 1:1 ratio is not required. Boroughs were also asked questions about governance, auditing and reporting of their offset funds to ensure the necessary structures and processes are in place. 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.
5. Each borough is responsible for setting up funds and collecting payments in line with GLA policy and guidance and any associated Local Plan policy. GLA officers provide advice and guidance to boroughs but it is for individual boroughs to determine how their fund will operate in practice in line with their own governance, auditing and reporting arrangements.

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

Yours sincerely


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.